AGRARIAN CONDITIONS IN OUDH;
1801–1856

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This is to certify that Mr SYED ZAHEER HUSAIN JAFRI has worked under my supervision for preparing his dissertation AGRARIAN CONDITIONS IN OUDH 1801-56, and that I consider it suitable for submission for the award of the M.PHIL. degree.

[Signature]

IRFAN HABIB
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[NAME]

[DATE]
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(i) **Oudh as a subsidiary state**

The autonomy of the principality of Oudh is conventionally dated from 1722 A.D. when Burhanul wak Sa'adat Khan was appointed as *subedar* of the mughal *suka* of Awadh. In actual fact the control of the mughal court over Awadh relaxed only gradually; even in 1739 Burhanul wak responded to Muhammad Shah's call to join his forces to resist Nadir Shah. His two immediate successors, Saifarjang (1739-1756) and Shujanddullah (1756-1775), formally held the appointment of *wazir* under the mughals; hence the designation of *nawab-wazir* applied to them and their successors. Being outside the range of Maratha invasions till at least the 1760's Oudh retained a certain amount of prosperity; and the first three rulers succeeded in maintaining a fairly efficient army of the conventional mughal pattern.

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(i) I use the word 'Oudh' to designate the Nawabi principality, reserving the more correct 'Awadh' (a corrupt form of Ayodhya) for the Mughal *suka*. Contemporary English usage where the variant spelling 'Oude' was also employed had veered round to 'Oudh' well before the Annexation.
The conditions altered in the 1760's when Oudh became embroiled with the English for the first time; and the threat from the Marathas grew to a dimension sufficient to force Shujauddaulah to seek a closer alliance with the English. In 1764-65 Shujauddaulah joined the armies of Shah Alam II and Mir Qasim in an unsuccessful attempt to invade Bihar and Bengal. After the defeat at Buxar and again at Janjua, Shujauddaulah was compelled to seek terms from the English. As a result he was permitted to continue as a ruler of his former territories (embracing the Mughal subahs of Awadh and Allahabad), but with certain areas (notably Allahabad itself) transferred to Shah Alam II. The appointment of the English Resident in 1773 and the deployment of various contingents of British forces in the Rohilla war, whereby Shujauddaulah was able to annex Rohilkhand, made Oudh one of the first subsidiary alliance states in India well before Wellesley.

After the death of Shujauddaulah, the situation underwent important changes. A new treaty was concluded with his successor Asaf-uddaulah in 1775 A.D. Now the amount of subsidy imposed on Oudh was increased; the zamindar of Ghazipur was asked to pay the tribute to Company instead of nawab, and the entire region of Banaras was ceded to the company. Later, in default of payment of the subsidies, the fort of Allahabad (which had been earlier transferred from Shah Alam II to Shujauddaulah) was taken away.
Asafuddaulah died in 1797 A.D., and this provided an opportunity to the Company to conclude a new treaty with his successors, first with Wazir Ali and then with Saadat Ali Khan (1798-1814). The treaty concluded in 1801 marks the watershed in the history of relations of the company and Oudh. Under this treaty the broken crescent formed by Rohilkhand, Farrukhabad, Kara, Etawah, Fatehpur, Kalpi, Gorakhpur, and Agra yielding an annual revenue of Rs. one crore and thirty five lacs was ceded by Oudh to the East India Company.

This completed the complete subordination of Oudh to the East India Company. Henceforth it was not even a buffer state. Except for its Terai frontier with Nepal, it bordered only British territories. In fact, therefore, it was 'free' from all external threats other that from the English; and the need for its rulers to look after the defence of their kingdom disappeared.

The English Resident had hitherto behaved at the Oudh court nominally at least as representative of an equal ally. But now (from 1801 A.D. to onwards) he assumed the position of an adviser whose word was final. The nawab-wazirs, charged him to look after the disbursement of the pensions to his family members and officials. Many endowments were also controlled by the Residents. In ceremonial matters the king and the Resident were
equal in status. Significantly there occurred no change in his position even after the sawab-wazir proclaimed himself king in 1819. To quote an English official, "At Lucknow for years the Resident held public durbars where the grandees attended, and pleaded against their own sovereign or his servants. Thus were the monarch and his subjects arrayed against each other; thus was the sovereign degraded in his own capital". On many occasions it happened that the king was forced to part with one of his efficient officers or trusted revenue collectors, simply because of the displeasure of the Resident.

The present dissertation attempts a study of the agrarian conditions of Oudh during this period of English domination of Oudh, from 1802 to 1856. A picture of 'misrule' was constantly presented by the Residents and British officials to justify constant interference in the affairs of Oudh. It is, as a result difficult to separate fact from fiction, or at any rate, to evolve a balanced picture from the mass of biased evidence. It may readily be acknowledged that misrule was present;

(1) Captain Mundy, an English traveller, visited the court of Lucknow in 1827 and his observations are worth mentioning, "Ostensibly his sawabship has been promoted with rank of servant to that of Lord. Virtually he has only changed masters, for like all other notice potentates who have admitted British Resident at their courts, he is so strictly supervised, that he can scarcely -- enact any important state measure without the interference of his super attentive allies." Pen and Pencil Sketches, London 1833, vol. I, p. 13.

in a subsidiary state, as has been pointed out by many historians, it was inevitable. What is less easy to determine is its scale and actual effect on society and economy. It is difficult to say without examining evidence on both sides of the border, whether, for example, peasants were better off in the mahalwar areas of Doab or in the nawabi principality of Oudh.

The attempt in this dissertation is to move from generalities to specific facts of agrarian life and administration of the Oudh principality in the hope that this would help to overcome in part at least the bias built into the bulk of our evidence. The use of Persian source-material is also attempted to the same purpose. No modern work has covered this particular theme, although even from the point of view of political history; it is considerable significance in that the Oudh Government was chiefly ensured for the rural anarchy that supposedly prevailed in the state.

The next section attempts a brief survey of the major sources used in this dissertation.
(ii) Sources

The material for the agrarian history of the kingdom of Oudh (1801-1855) in published form is surprisingly scanty. The chronicles, few in number as they are, throw little light on this important theme. The bulk of our information comes from the reports and narratives of British officials and travellers. These can be supplemented by Persian manuscript sources, notably administrative documents, sale-deeds, land-grants, etc., which are preserved in collections like those of the U.P. Record Office, Allahabad and the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

The outstanding source for us is the important survey (1) by Donald Butter of the southern parts of Oudh. Though Butter does not explicitly refer to use of official documents of the Oudh government his detailed survey was hardly possible without (2) some cooperation by local officials. Butter's account appears

(1) Butter was posted as a physician in the 63rd regiment of the native infantry at the Contention of Sultanpur. He was asked to provide these details by the Medical Board of Calcutta. His report was published under the title, Outlines of the Topography and Statistics of the Southern Districts of Oudh and the Contention of Sultanpur Oudh, Calcutta, 1839.

(2) However, the nature of the information is such that it could not have been possible for anyone to obtain it without having access to official papers. But curiously enough Butter had not referred to any such source.
a little biased against the native Government and administration since he offers very severe comments, which are not always well grounded. For example if he found that the people were maimed or blind, or if they suffered from small pox and apthæmia' he ascribed these misfortunes to the 'wretched conditions and mal-administration of the country'. We find him sharing the views of other British officials, that if Oudh was annexed to the British dominions, the people would be better off.

Another weakness in Butler's survey is that though he refers to agrarian oppression he does not give us adequate particulars about agrarian administration and land rights.

However apart from the few short comings this is a very important text which gives us particulars of crops, agricultural production, implements, towns and markets, etc.

The next important work is Charles Elliott's chronicles of Oudh, which is a near contemporary work. It deals exclusively

(1) Ibid., p. 169.

(2) Butler speaks of the reiyat of Faizabad since the days of Saadat Ali oppressed by the Baughot slindars and shahedars so that many of them emigrate and all earnestly desire to see their country placed under the Company's Government." (pp.51-2).

(3) He remarks, for example, that in the 1814, year after the death of Saadat Ali the rent was fixed at such a rate—generally 50% above that of former times—as to leave the farmer little beyond a bare subsistence". Ibid., p.69.

(4) Charles Alfred Elliott, The Chronicle of Oudh, a district in Oudh, Allahabad 1862 A.D.
with the history of the *sambandar* families of Unao, particularly the Bais clan, down to 1861. From our point of view, the important chapters are on 'Rajput Colonization'; The Delhi administration and the *nawabees* with a separate note dealing with the rise of *talukadar* tenures. Its author utilized the opportunity of consulting documents in the hands of leading *sambandar* families and other local material and traditions.

Charles Elliott provides useful information about revenue forming and the financial administration of the district. He is particularly illuminating on the subject of the relations that existed between the *sambandars* *talukadars* and the *jagirdars*. But he shows surprisingly lack of concern with purely economic matters such as the state of agriculture and trade.

Among the traveller's accounts, the most important are

2. He admits that he had certain pre-conceived notions, but he revised these after he had made his own personal observations.
3. "I have been pleased, however and surprised, after all which I have heard of Oude, to find the country so completely under plough, since were the oppression so great as is sometimes stated. I can not think that we should witness so considerable population." *Ibid.*, p. 49.
He appears to have acquired some sympathy with the native Government of Oudh. Indeed he blames the non-cooperative attitude of the Company's officials for the anarchy in the revenue and civil administration of the kingdom. His judgement about the people's wishes is the opposite of that of Bucker, "They (the people of Oudh) prefer to be governed by their native nawabs rather than to be placed under the rule of the Company."

W.H. Sleeman's diary of the tour of Oudh which he made from December 1849 to February 1850 is now a celebrated historical text. Sleeman was then Resident at Lucknow; and the tour was made to supplement the report which he had presented earlier to Lord Dalhousie. To him the basic fault in the political set up of the kingdom of Oudh lay in the lack of effective 'Central Government' and the 'maladministration' which followed from it. To meet this unfortunate situation

(1) Ibid., pp. 85-86.
(2) Ibid., pp. 82-3 and 90.
(3) Ibid., pp. 89-90.
(4) W.H. Sleeman, Diary of a Tour Through the Kingdom of Oudh, 2 vols., London 1858.
(6) Ibid., p. 13.
he drew a plan and submitted it to the Governor-General under which the king was to delegate all his powers to a board of three members chosen from the 'highest and ablest members of the aristocracy present in Lucknow'. A careful perusal of diary makes one to believe that he was not in favour of the annexation of the kingdom by the Company.

Whatever the reasons behind the compilation of Sleeman's diary, it still stands as a treasure-house of facts relating to crops, agriculture, local administration etc. There are repeated references to particulars of the Oudh financial and revenue system. *Zamindars* and *tallugadars* find most frequent mention in diary, and this help us to form an idea of their power and importance.

A number of original documents at the U.P. State Record Office, Allahabad (hereafter referred to as Allahabad Documents) and at the Research Library, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (especially Khairabad and Jais documents) offer considerable information especially on the system of land-grants, *zamindari* rights and local administration. These have been extensively used


(2) After the 'mutiny' it was believed that Sleeman was a spokesman of Lord Dalhousie and worked as an emissary of later in a pre-arranged plot to annex the kingdom of
is the present dissertation.

There exists in Persian a short but valuable account of the administration of the kingdom of Oudh written during the decade after the annexation, having been penned down by the Court waqai nigar (news writer), Lalji. The author himself tells us that his mirat-ul-susa', a supplement to the same author's history of Oudh, Sultan-al-Hikayat, hitherto unpublished. He wrote the mirat-ul-susa' as a separate work because he felt that the details of administration which led to the ruin of the Oudh kingdom might not be well received.

Lalji gives valuable particulars about the revenue system, methods of realization, the relations that existed between the peasants on the one hand and the revenue officials, zamindars, jagirdars and the taallugadar on the other.

The book is divided into eight chapters, and the first chapter is divided into five sections.

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cond. from back:

aff Oudh. It was also alleged that he had manufactured the evidence to discredit the native administration and had thus provided a justification for annexation - However this view was corrected when a letter of Sileman, written sometimes in 1854 to Lord Dalhousie, strongly denouncing annexation as a solution of Oudh problem, was published in The Times in November 1857. (R.D.Reeve's Introduction to Sileman in Oudh, p.18).

(1) Lalji belonged to a respectable family of Karrah. His ancestors were the holders of the jagir under the nawab-wasirs, but subsequently they were made the zamindars by the English. He himself was appointed the waqai-nigar at the Residency in 1829 and continued at the same post till the annexation of Oudh by English. Cf. S.A Rashid, Miratul Ams, Proceedings, JNIR 30(1954) pp.98-100.
Since the author himself was a waqai-nigar at the court and must have had full access to official records, his work may generally be considered authoritative.

In addition, certain relevant information is found in the Persian chronicles of Oudh and the Journals (English and Urdu) of the day. Proportionate to the total mass of the text of these sources, the information gleaned is rather slight. The texts and journals consulted by me are listed in the bibliography; and there is therefore perhaps no need to furnish any details of the individual works or articles here.
POPULATION AND THE EXTENT OF CULTIVATION

The political boundaries of the Kingdom of Oudh fluctuated a great deal between the battle of Buxar in 1765 and the year 1801, when a treaty was concluded between the East India Company and Nawab Saadat Ali in which the Nawab gave up control over Gorakhpur, Rohilkhand and trans-Ganga tract. The limits of Oudh from 1801 onwards down to its annexation (1856) remained more or less fixed. The principality was bounded on the north and north-east by Nepal; on the east by the British district of Gorakhpur; on the south-east by the British district of Allahabad; on the south-west by the Doab including the British districts of Fatehpur, Kanpur and Farrukhabad; and on the north-west by Shahjahanpur. Its limits extended from latitude 29°6 to 25°34, and from longitude 79°45 to 83°11. The total area was computed at 23,923 square miles. A number of tributaries of the Ganges such as the Ghaghra, Gomti, Deora, Rapti and Sai flowed through Oudh, while the Ganges itself pierced its western

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boundary. It is this compact region in the upper Gangetic plains that is the subject of concern in this study.

Our study of the agrarian conditions in Oudh may usefully begin with an attempt to determine the population and the extent of cultivation. Only after such an exercise can one work-out the density of the population and the land-man ratio. General remarks and occasional observations on the extent of cultivation are frequently made by contemporary travellers but these are not very helpful, for either they tend to exaggerate or are quite vague. At the same time there exist no statistical accounts for the first half of the 19th century.

As far as the pre-censal population estimates of Oudh are concerned, they are uniformly gross under-estimates.

Previous to the first all India census in 1872 (1868 for Oudh), there were some censuses carried out in different parts of


The census of 1868 gave the area mentioned in our text.

(Census of India, 1911) Cf. Muhammad Islamullah Khan, Political Relations of Oude Kingdom with East India Company, 1765-1856.

British India. For example there were fairly reliable censuses in the north-western provinces (U.P.) in 1853 and 1865. But as Oudh was a separate native state until 1856, no census operation was undertaken there until 1868. The 1868 census was, however conducted carefully, and it was accepted as part of the official all-India Census of 1872 without any alteration or revision.

On the basis of the 1868 census figures, the total population of Oudh can be determined for the year 1856, by scaling it down by the same proportion in which population had increased in the north-western provinces during this period. Since the 1853 census for these provinces is fairly reliable, we can select some districts adjacent to Oudh, and determine the rate of growth in population for a period of 19 subsequent years down to 1872.

The total population of the ten selected districts of U.P., which encircled Oudh from three sides, in the year 1853 was 1,00,27,145 and 1,10,16,947 by the census of 1872.

(2) Ibid.
(3) The district selected for the purpose of our study are Basti, Gorakhpur, Cawnpur, Shahjahnpur, Pilibhit, Bijnore, Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Meerut and Saharanpur. The figures have been taken from Census of India, Vol. XV, 1911.
(4) Census of India, Vol. XV, 1911.
The compound rate of growth in population was thus about 0.38% per annum. Applying this rate in the growth of the population of Oudh, we can proceed as follows:

(a) The population of Oudh in 1868 1,12,21,043
(b) The per annum rate of growth in the population of the adjacent area 0.38%
(c) The population of Oudh in 1856 1,07,17,329

The density of population was therefore about 448 to a square mile in 1856. The population so determined was thus almost double that supposed by earlier estimates (5 and 5½ million). Indeed, surprise was expressed by British officials at the very large figure revealed by the census of 1868.

As for the extent of cultivation, standard statistics begin only with the agricultural statistics of British India published from 1884-5 onwards. In 1884-85, the first year of

(1) A.A. Asmi has calculated the population of Oudh for 1861, as 92,24,071 and for 1851 as 83,01,664. He doubts (for no strong reasons) the accuracy of the census figures of 1868, and has based his calculations on the census figures of 1881. He then arrives at his estimates for 1861 and 1851 by assuming a 10% increase per decade; for this, however there seems no justification and his estimate for 1851 is therefore very much on the lower side. See his paper, 'Position of Agriculture and Economy of the Nawabi Oudh' Indian History Congress, Proceedings 1967 pp. 82-90.

(2) The confession was made that "we (had) always underestimated it, and no body imagined that the population was so dense till there was a regular census taken" British Parliamentary Papers, 1871 Colonies: East India IV, U.P., p. 99.
the returns, the total cropped area is 87,64,086 acres. 

The census of 1881 gave the population of Oudh as 1,20,19,378. The cultivated land in 1884-85 was therefore about 0.7291 acre per head.

But a serious drawback in using the agricultural statistics of 1884-85 is that it did not record the current fallow land under the category of the cultivated land. The agricultural statistics of the year 1885-86 appear to be more accurate, as these recorded the area of current fallow under the column of cultivated land, instead of entering it under the category of uncultivated waste as the statistics of 1884-85 seem to have done. The total cultivated area in 1885-86 was 93,52,756 acres, and assuming the population of Oudh in 1885 to be 1,20,19,378, the cultivated land came to 0.769 acres per head.

Although the argument seems to be a weak one, even if we assume that the average operational holding of the Indian peasants remained more or less constant, between 1856 and

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(1) Agricultural Statistics of British India, 1884-85
(2) Census of India, Vol. XV 1911 p.
(3) The total cultivated area in 1884-85 is shown as 87,64,086 acres, while in 1885-86, 4,33,693 acres of current fallow are included in the category of cultivated land, raising the figures to 92,52,756 acres from 87,64,086 acres. But it is quite impossible that such a phenomenal increase in the cultivated area in a year could have taken place. There is every reason to believe that if 1884-85, the current fallow has been included under the cat. of uncultivated land. For these reasons we have based all our assumptions on the figures given by the 1885-86 statistics of Agricultural Statistics of British India 1884-85 & 1885-6.
1886, we can work-out the approximate cultivated area in Oudh for the year 1856, by applying the cultivated land-man ratio of 1885-86 to the population of the kingdom of Oudh during 1856:

(a) Population of Oudh in 1856 1,07,17,329
(b) Cultivated land-man ratio in 1885-86 0.769 acre per
(c) Cultivated area in Oudh in 1856 82,50,199 acres

Cultivation should thus have been more than 10% less in extent in 1856 than it was in 1885-86. Part of this must have been under forest. The presence of forest, alongside rivers and the deep ravines and on the open plains of south Oudh are described by Butler in 1836. Sleeman speaks of how in the midst of the forests, the land-holders had established one or two mud-forts or garhias. These forests were used as hide-outs by the refractory safindaras and their retainers at the time when their villages were 'invaded' by the chakledar or safidar in order to extract the land revenue from them. These forests were preserved by safindaras and they prevented

(1) Butler tells us of the presence of tigers, wild hogs and deers in the jungals near Nwardipur and in the jungal of Harha and Jamjali near Baiswara. But no estimates of forested areas are provided by him. op.cit. pp. 3-10.
(2) op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 279-90.
forest clearing as a measure of defence. Sleeman offers us estimates of areas under forest in a number of districts in terms of square miles.

(1) Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts (ohakla)</th>
<th>Area under forest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sultanpur</td>
<td>279 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uldemau</td>
<td>102 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Daruabad district</td>
<td>76 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dewa-Jahangirabad</td>
<td>64 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bangar</td>
<td>72 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Salon</td>
<td>72 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bainswara</td>
<td>30 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hydergarh</td>
<td>7½ sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Khyrabad Mehmoodi</td>
<td>150 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Baree and Muchreyta</td>
<td>30 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total forested area (sq. miles) 888½ sq. miles

(1) Sleeman W.H., op.cit.1971 edited by R.D. Reeves Cambridge see Appendix 'A' pp. 294-7
The agricultural statistics of 1885-6 show no area under forest under these districts. It may then be assumed that by 1885-6, the 900 sq. miles or half a million of acres of forests estimated by Sleeman had gone into cultivation.
III. **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

(1) **Land-use and Crops**

Agricultural production had been the backbone of all the pre-modern societies. A number of crops were raised in Oudh upon its "fertile though light" soil.

The cereal crops cultivated in Oudh can be broadly divided into rice, wheat and millets. A substantial quantity of pulses was also grown in both the harvests; *rabi* and *kharif*.

Rice constituted the chief cereal crop of Oudh, since its cultivation suited the low lying areas subject to inundations. Rice was accordingly cultivated throughout the Terai region, and along side the major rivers. It was also cultivated where the irrigation facilities were easily available. The area under rice cultivation seems to has been much larger than that under wheat. The agricultural statistics disclose that in 1885-86 there were 21,59,424 acres of cultivated land under rice as against 15,56,198 acres under wheat in Oudh.

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(1) "The soil of Oudh is generally fertile though light, when properly cultivated and watered, it is capable of producing all crops. Not only are rice, wheat, barley, with many kind of vetches, and oil plants grown, but opium, sugar-cane and indigo are produced ——". The kingdom of Oudh, Calcutta Review, Vol. III, 1845, p. 383.

(2) Detailed figure of the area under various crops in Oudh in 1885-86 abstracted from the Agricultural Statistics are given in tabular form in the appendix to this chapter.


(4) *Agricultural Statistics of British India 1885-86*, p. 36.
Next to rice came wheat. It was suited to higher grounds. In the higher land lying between the rivers, it constituted the major food crop. In the lower grounds and in the Terai region its cultivation was not possible because "wheat does not thrive there, it turn yellow and rots. Hoarfrost is extremely prejudicial to both wheat and barley." The present district of Barabanki and Sitapur were famous for the good quality and high-yield of their wheat.

The area in which coarse grain was cultivated coincided closely with the area of wheat; Jowar and bajra were crops of the drier lands. Other food crops such as arhar, chana, kudai and tisi were also raised on the higher grounds. Maize which became a significant crop by the end of the 19th century in Oudh.

(2) Butter, pp. 348-9.
(3) In the Daryabad-Radauli region the yield of the wheat was about 25 mounds per bigha. Ibid, pp. 59-60.
(4) This crop finds no particular mention in contemporary sources, but Watt informs us that in 1905-6 the total area under this crop was 353, 161 acres in Oudh. There is every reason to believe that in agricultural statistics (1885-86), this crop had been included in the column of 'other food grains'. In 1850 a substantial area must have been under this crop. Cf. Watt: The Commercial Products of India, p. 1037.
(5) Among the millets, it was the major food crop sown on the drier lands. Its ratio was high as compared to Jowar and maize. Watt, p. 642.
(7)
is not mentioned by Butter in his account of southern Oudh, and was probably sparsely cultivated during the first half of the 19th century.

The chief cash-crops included oil-seeds, sugar-cane, cotton, indigo, opium and tobacco. Garden cultivation or the production of the vegetable for market as well as for domestic use was also undertaken. It was carried on, in or around the villages, by peasants belonging to some special castes.

Sugar-cane was perhaps the most important cash-crop. Butter says that it was raised on small patches here and there, particularly between the river Sai and the Ganges. Thornton describes its cultivation as very circumscribed. However, while

(3) Butter, pp. 61-62.
(4) Ibid., p. 83
(5) Ibid., pp. 59-60; Thornton, pp. 28-29.
(6) Ibid., p. 69.
(7) The peasants who carried on garden-cultivation were mostly kashhig, morga, husurag and luriyas. They used to raise almost every vegetable on the 'richest soil immediately round the villages, in enclosed and reserved fields'. The reason seems to be that such cultivation needed much manuring and the land around the village was very rich in having 'natural manure' provided by human and animal waste. Cf. Butter, p. 69; Sleeman, vol. I, pp. 135-6.
(8) Butter, p. 61.
(9) Thornton, pp. 28-9.
passing through the district of Sultanpur six kinds of sugar-cane were noticed by Sleeman, and he says that its cultivation was there quite extensive. The agricultural statistics of 1885-86 show as many as 1,42,484 acres under sugar-cane. But this high figure may have been due to a subsequent extension in sugar-cane cultivation.

Cotton was noticed by Butter as a crop "produced throughout the country and abundantly on the high land along the bank of Sai ...." Moreover it was, "cultivated throughout Baiswara, particularly on its western part." A small amount of cotton was exported to the British district of Mau and Ghazipur. The remainder was worked-up by the cotton-corders (dhuniya) in the country, particularly at Tanda. The chief markets of the cleaned cotton are said to have been Salon and Bainswara. It is possible that cotton cultivation declined after the annexation, in 1885-86, only 72,030 acres were reported to be sown with cotton in Oudh. Indian oil has been a part of the diet of every peasant since the dawn of civilization, but the history of oil seeds as a cash-crop needs to be studied separately. Our authorities for the Oudh kingdom do not characterize oil seeds as farming an

(2) In 1885-86, it was the major cash-crop, next only to the oil-seeds. Cf. Agricultural Statistics, p. 26.
(3) Butter, pp. 61-62.
important set of crops; but the statistical returns of \(1885-86\) showed an area of 3,14,934 acres under oil-seeds. Possibly oil seeds cultivation expanded after annexation with the European demand promoted by the construction of railways.

Poppy was cultivated along the bank of river Gomti (2) by some selected castes, particularly kechis. It was mainly exported to the adjacent British districts. The little amount of opium grown on the right bank of the river Gomti was consumed inside the country and was also brought to the markets of Lucknow and Faizabad. It appears that its cultivation was abandoned in the later period, since the statistical returns of 1885-86, record no area under opium.

Indigo was cultivated, but the product was judged inferior and did not apparently attract European Indio planters.

The cultivation of potatoes does not seem to have made much progress in Nawabi Oudh; it was planted by few kunjras and kechhis in the vicinity of Kanpur, Lucknow and Faizabad.

\[\text{(1) Ibid, p.26.}\]
\[\text{(2) Butler, p.63.}\]
\[\text{(3) Butler had indeed predicted that the time is not for distant, when the growth of opium will constitute one of the principal sources of the revenue of Oudh (pp.60-1) Watt however informs us that in 1905-6, an area little less than 200,000 acres under opium cultivation. Watt, p.861.}\]
\[\text{(4) Butler says that Oudh indigo was of an inferior quality, as compared to that made on the British frontier. So it was not made on a large scale. Butler, p.83.}\]
The produce was mainly exported to the nearest British contemptions. The extension of this crop, in the interior region of the country was checked by the prejudice held by the people, especially the Brahmans and Baugotis, against eating a new vegetable especially a root. It also does not seem to have become as yet a part of the towns man's diet in Oudh.

Tobacco was also raised in a biga or two by kuniyas (2) and mora'is near each village. It appears that tobacco was not an important cash crop; in 1885-86 only 17,159 acres were covered by this crop.

Among the intoxicants, perhaps a little amount of ganja was also raised in the country, Batter says explicitly, "No ganja is raised in Baiswara; and he attributes this to the, 'high tone of morality' of the inhabitants of the district.

Another product of the land was saltpetre. It was obtained out of saline soil, known as phah by the puniyas. The crude mineral (shora) was sold to the semindars, who used to employ the skilful puniyas to get it refined to form pure salt-petre.

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(1) Batter, p.70, Watt also mentions potato cultivation in Oudh Watt, p.1026.
(2) Batter, p. 69.
(4) Apart from the reasons given above, the soil of Baiswara was dry and irrigation was difficult, and this inhibited the growth of poppy and ganja. Cf. Batter, p.69.
(5) Ibid, pp. 76-77.
In matters of crop rotation, "the knowledge of the natives ...... is very limited". Only two systems of rotations, suited to high ground and another to the lower ground, are said to have been followed. Rabif (spring) and kharif (autumn) were the two major cropping seasons. Double cropping (i.e. the raising of both rabif and kharif crops) was possible on some quarter of the cultivated land in Oudh in 1885-86. This suggests that double-cropping was quite extensive in Oudh.

As for estimates of actual yields of the various crops, these are provided only by Butler for south Oudh (1836). The table he offers is reproduced below.


(2) In 1885-6, the area cropped more than once a year was 22,06,739 acres, while the total net area cropped amounted to 8,819,063 acres.
### Kharif crops sown in the hot season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the crop</th>
<th>Seeds of seed per bigha</th>
<th>Produce in a good year (mans)</th>
<th>Produce in a bad year (mans)</th>
<th>Former produce in mans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kodu</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 to 12</td>
<td>4 or 5</td>
<td>16 or 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Makra or Narua</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 or 9</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>10 or 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sanwan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>10 or 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/3 to 1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Makai</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16 or 18</td>
<td>5 or 6</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Juwar</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 or 12</td>
<td>4 or 5</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Bajra</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 or 12</td>
<td>4 or 5</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Urad or Mas</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>8 or 16</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Methi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 or 6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Arhar</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 or 2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Til</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7 of seed or 1½ of oil</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Ashan kharif (rice)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8 or 9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Jarhan (rice)</td>
<td>40 for 100 from 50 or 60</td>
<td>6 bigha</td>
<td>6 bigha from 6 bigha</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Butter, p. 57.
### Rabi crops sown in the cold season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the crop</th>
<th>Seed per</th>
<th>Man of produce in a year</th>
<th>Man of produce in a year</th>
<th>Former produce in Man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bigha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chana</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14 or 15</td>
<td>5 to 8</td>
<td>18 to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Genhun</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>14 or 15</td>
<td>7 to 8</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Jav</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20 to 22</td>
<td>10 to 13</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sarson</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>1/2 or ½</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Tisi or Arsi</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 to 4</td>
<td>1½ to 2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gauha or Barra</td>
<td>1/2 to 1</td>
<td>½ to 1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Kusum</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td>4½ to 5</td>
<td>½ to 1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Masur</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8 to 10</td>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Butter, p. 58.*
These tables show a fairly reasonable seed-yield ratio for wheat, 1:11 or 1:12 in good years and about 1:5 in lean years. It is difficult to say anything more because Butter does not define the weight of his man, and given high figures, it is impossible to believe that he could be using the standard 'mound' of the British administration.

The prices of food grains naturally varied from year to year. Brij Narain had recorded the prices of wheat at Farrukhabad from the year 1803 to 1834. Farrukhabad along with other territories was ceded to the East India Company in 1801 by a treaty with Nawab Sa'adat Ali of Oudh; it was adjacent to the Oudh kingdom. The prices may then be taken as applying to the parts of the Oudh kingdom as well. At Farrukhabad, in 1803 wheat was selling 47 sers for a rupee, in 1834, 27 sers for a rupee. The lowest price reached was 61 sers per rupee in 1812. The years 1817 and 1827 witnessed the highest prices viz, only 15 sers per rupee. The wheat prices of the annexed Oudh kingdom during 1861 are recorded in the British Parliamentary papers. The average of such prices (obtained from the prices of individual districts) at which

(2) Brij Narain: Indian Economic Life; Past and Present, Lahore 1929, p. 103.
what was being sold in 1861 was \( \frac{1}{3} \) sers per rupee. This is corroborated very closely by the prices of wheat recorded in the weekly newspaper of Oudh, *Tilism* in 1856, viz, 24 sers of the wheat per rupee.

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(2) *Tilism* I No. 4 (15th August 1856 AD) Lucknow, p. 8.
ii - Means of cultivation and irrigation

The agricultural implements, modes of the tillage of the land and the methods of irrigation, employed by the peasants of Oudh in our period were quite similar to those used in the early decades of 19th century. Thornton thought that the, "modes of tillage were extremely rude and inefficient". The 'operation of ploughing' was carried out so feebly and unskilfully that it had to be repeated between 30 and 40 times for a wheat crop; after that harrowing had to be undertaken seven or eight times. However this much ploughing and harrowing was done only to make the soil more amenable to wheat cultivation.

The cattle employed in agriculture were mainly oxen and buffaloes. Already in southern Oudh, scarcity of land available for grazing, both waste and forest, was being felt, leading to a shortage of cattle for agricultural operations. There had been large-scale clearings of the forest for the purpose of fire-wood and to extend the area under the cultivation. Another reason for the scarcity of cattle was the "universal practice of revenue-collector's seizing and carrying

(1) Butter, pp. 62-3.
(2) Thornton, pp. 29-30.
(3) Butter, pp. 65-6, Thornton, pp. 656.
them away when their owners fall into arrears*. The difficulty in getting cattle for agricultural operations was such fields had to be watered, it was quite common to see "all the members of a family, male and female, working instead of cattle at the well rope". The animals employed in agriculture were mostly "stunted, broken down and miserable." The price of a pair of bullocks and oxen ranged from Rs.10 to 20. An ordinary peasant could hardly think of buying a good pair during normal times.

Manuring was done with cow, bullock and horse dung. But one would think that since there was some scarcity of cattle, the dung-manure would have been available only to the big peasants. Moreover manuring was not done scientifically and Butter thought that the natives had much to learn in this regard.

Artificial irrigation was practised throughout the kingdom of Oudh in order to supplement the "bounty of the monsoon." The principal sources of irrigation were wells, tanks, and lakes. Butter thought that the need for artificial

(1) Butter, pp. 65-6.
(2) Thornton, pp. 29-30.
(3) Butter, pp. 65-66.
(5) The total irrigated area in 1885-6 was about 19,28,668 acres. In which 7,16,674 acres were irrigated by the tanks; 10,63,780 acres by the wells, while 1,47,414 acres were irrigated by the other sources. cf. Agricultural Statistics of India, 1885-6, p. 32.
Irrigation had been growing in Oudh because of a possible diminution of rainfall owing to forest-clearance. The clearing of the forest was carried out very rapidly in north-western parts of the kingdom, and it was not accompanied by any artificial system of planting which might counteract the parching effects produced by the removal of the forests.

The most common practice for obtaining water from a river or a lake, when the bank is nearly perpendicular and close to water, was by means of a basket, woven of split bamboos, called *dugla*. It was used by two men facing each other and holding a rope, tied with the sides of the *dugla*. By applying this method three bighas of land could be irrigated in a day by four men, who used to work by turn and raise the water up to 6 feet. When the river bank was much above the water level, the water was raised by using a leather bag and rope. The rope was either passed over a pulley wheel made of wood or a cylinder made of split bamboos. The rope was pulled either by cattle or manually.

The wells were dug 60 or 70 feet deep. From these wells also the water was raised by using a leather bag (*pur*).
Pulled by rope. The lever-based dhenkii was also used for raising water from the wells of small depth.

The absence of the Persian wheel (rahat) was noted by Butter. It was of course, a labour saving device; but it is possible that it was not used in the kingdom of Oudh because it had not yet appeared as a metallic machine.

It appears that there was absolutely no canal-irrigation in any part of the kingdom of Oudh. The agricultural statistics of 1835-6, also show no returns under the column 'area irrigated by the canals'.

As compared to the cultivated area in 1885-6, the total irrigated area was very small (about 18% of the total cultivated area). There is no reason to believe that the proportion was much higher in the Oudh kingdom. Much of the larger area of land was thus left to the mercies of rainfall and riverine inundations.

(1) Butter says that on the left bank of river Gomti, the aridity and sterility was so much that 2 or 3 miles from the river, even digging of the wells was not possible. p.48. However in 1885-86 the total area irrigated by wells was about 10,63,680 acres. Agricultural Statistics, p.32.

(2) Butter, p.32.
### Appendix

#### Oudh: Crops Cultivated in 1885–96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Cereals and Pulse</th>
<th>Oil Seeds</th>
<th>Sugar Cane</th>
<th>Cotton Gilt</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Indigo</th>
<th>Coffee</th>
<th>Tobacco Chift</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
<th>Total Area of Crops</th>
<th>Deduct Area of Non-irrigated Crops</th>
<th>Herbage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LUCKNOW</td>
<td>61,985</td>
<td>20,956</td>
<td>248,677</td>
<td>1,192</td>
<td>2,557</td>
<td>3,994</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18,678</td>
<td>14,678</td>
<td>14,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNNOD</td>
<td>82,809</td>
<td>81,145</td>
<td>508,015</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>619,4</td>
<td>3,215</td>
<td>4,089</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15,030</td>
<td>13,687</td>
<td>13,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARABANKI</td>
<td>163,638</td>
<td>256,034</td>
<td>615,262</td>
<td>72,35</td>
<td>13,721</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>298</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46,714</td>
<td>21,017</td>
<td>21,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITAPUR</td>
<td>143,348</td>
<td>163,471</td>
<td>704,286</td>
<td>4,679</td>
<td>15,705</td>
<td>4,083</td>
<td>3,616</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21,138</td>
<td>17,900</td>
<td>17,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAKIMI</td>
<td>63,641</td>
<td>181,220</td>
<td>693,281</td>
<td>4,414</td>
<td>16,735</td>
<td>31,987</td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12,758</td>
<td>14,740</td>
<td>14,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KHERI</td>
<td>141,644</td>
<td>117,049</td>
<td>554,635</td>
<td>53,445</td>
<td>22,332</td>
<td>2,341</td>
<td>401</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,893</td>
<td>3,917</td>
<td>3,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRYABAD</td>
<td>233,194</td>
<td>106,015</td>
<td>411,599</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>27,923</td>
<td>2,96</td>
<td>5,274</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>598,678</td>
<td>30,643</td>
<td>30,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAHRQAI</td>
<td>274,165</td>
<td>191,637</td>
<td>538,618</td>
<td>132,492</td>
<td>13,175</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>2032</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32,448</td>
<td>6,957</td>
<td>6,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GONDA</td>
<td>462,508</td>
<td>273,590</td>
<td>558,374</td>
<td>95,272</td>
<td>8,843</td>
<td>1,589</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62,424</td>
<td>33,184</td>
<td>33,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAI-BAND</td>
<td>161,225</td>
<td>85,053</td>
<td>435,685</td>
<td>1,762</td>
<td>1,988</td>
<td>1,149</td>
<td>1,999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>34,749</td>
<td>34,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SULTANPUR</td>
<td>210,061</td>
<td>79,743</td>
<td>405,946</td>
<td>23,366</td>
<td>13,357</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2,204</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25,363</td>
<td>15,970</td>
<td>15,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRATAPGARH</td>
<td>200,437</td>
<td>56,712</td>
<td>400,372</td>
<td>30,573</td>
<td>5,393</td>
<td>4,489</td>
<td>1,042</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15,627</td>
<td>1,6,759</td>
<td>1,6,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,168,945</td>
<td>1,956,979</td>
<td>3,189,536</td>
<td>244,964</td>
<td>14,704</td>
<td>23,036</td>
<td>16,435</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24,579</td>
<td>2,20,763</td>
<td>2,20,763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Note: The table presents the area of crops cultivated in Oudh province in 1885–96, categorized by district and type of crop. The numbers represent the area in acres.*
III

LAND-REVENUE SYSTEM OF OUDH KINGDOM

(a) Land-revenue demand

Land-revenue in Oudh was the basis of the entire political and economic structure of the kingdom, since it formed the major mechanism for extracting the surplus from agriculture. Naturally the size of the surplus extracted varied according to circumstances such as the yield at particular harvests, fluctuations in prices, or the effectiveness of the collection machinery. As was observed by Butter, "there are no fixed limits to the land-revenue or rent, which he (the king) levies from its occupants, save their inability or unwillingness to pay."

As this remark implies, land-revenue was seen by the British in the light of rent; it therefore further implied that the right of ownership of the land vested in the king. This was explicitly asserted by Butter, "the sovereign is, agreeably to established Indian rule, the only acknowledged proprietor of the soil." I have not, however, found a 'native' statement to this effect; though quite possibly the British interpretation of Indian conditions might well have begun to colour the views of the Indians as well by this period.

(1) Butter, p. 48.
(2) Ibid, p. 54 also for similar use of rent for revenue.
We have no information regarding the magnitude of the land-revenue demand in relation to produce of the land or in relation to the surplus generated by peasant cultivation. What we have is only the rates of the land-revenue per bigha in rupees. By taking the prices of the agricultural products prevalent in Oudh or in the adjacent territories under the East India Company, one can have some idea about the size of the revenue in terms of grain.

Butter informs us that, "During that sovereign's (Sa'adat Ali 1798-1814) life, the rent of good land varied from one to one and half rupee per bigha; now, the assessment is 2, 3 or 4 rupees per bigha, and can seldom be fully levied without the ruin, both to raiyat and zaminder." At another place he praises good and judicious administration of Sa'adat Ali and then adds, "Since the death of Nawab Sa'adat Ali — rent is fixed at such a rate — generally 50% above that of former times." But Heber who came to Oudh during the time of Sa'adat Ali says, "I asked the rent per bigha of the land. He said generally 4 rupees, but sometimes 6; and sometimes the peasant had all taken from him." It appears that spoken to some one who had exaggerated the matter. The revenue rates prevalent in Tiloin Raj during 1836

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(1) Ibid, p. 54.
(2) Ibid, p. 54.
(3) Heber, pp. 102-3.
indicate the extent of the exaggeration, "The assessment being (here) allowed to remain at the old standard of 2 rupees per bigha of old arable soil and one rupee for newly reclaimed land."

Batter tells us that the revenue rates per bigha in southern Oudh varied from 3 to 4 rupees; the latter rate he deems to be rather harsh and difficult of realization without the ruin of the taxpayers. At another place we come across the statement that because of the high rates of the assessment the peasants were left with little for their subsistence. They had not even been left with the resources to carry on cultivation and were forced to borrow the seeds from the village bankers. Heber tells us that he was amazed that under such extremely oppressive conditions the peasants could still carry on cultivation. He met with the reply, "What can they do? — — — They must eat; and when they have put the seeds in the ground, they must wait till it comes up, and then take what they can get of it."

(1) Batter, pp. 109-114.
(2) Ibid., p. 54. As far as the size of bigha is concerned, some local variations had been noticed by Batter, prevalent in the kingdom of Oudh. But it appears that the revenue-rates as well as the agricultural productivity of the soil per bigha had been recorded for the standard unit of the pucca bigha (20 lathes x 20 lathes; the Latha being of 100 inches). There appears no reason to believe that the revenue-rates and the productivity of the soil per bigha were recorded anywhere in kacha bigha which was only 40% in size, of a pucca bigha. However the methods by which the revenue-officials dealt with the problem of local variations in units is not known. (Batter, pp. 82-83).
(3) Ibid., p. 49.
(4) Heber, pp. 102-3.
The effects of the high revenue-demand were compounded by the oppressive measure employed by the revenue contractors and the Jagirdars. These in turn were intensified by the introduction of the gabs system for revenue collection.

Sleeman has described, in detail, the lakulame gabs (pledge to collect and pay a certain sum, for which the estate is held liable) and wasuli gabs (pledge to pay the collector or troops a sum which the commandant may be able to collect). In the second method the work of the collection was carried out by the soldiers of the commandant. The soldiers used to obtain the amount with the utmost harshness, Sleeman observes, "If they can't collect it from the sale of all the crops of the season, they seize and sell the stock and the property of all kinds to be found on the estate; and if this will not suffice, they will not scruple to seize and sell the women and children."

Moreover, the peasants were obliged to pay certain other fiscal dues, which in turn formed the amount of recognized

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(2) The word has been explained as lakalami or 'undisputed'. This perhaps is the most plausible explanation of the term Wilson's Glossary of the Revenue and the Judicial Terms, p. 483 (S.V. Lakulame).
(3) This has been explained as Qabz-ul wasul or a receipt of the revenue. (Ibid, p.383, S.V.Kabzul wasul).
perquisites of the zamindars. Thus the zamidar was "authorised to levy for his own benefit a rupee from every (1) zamidar - - - - . This gratuity is called bhent." The fiscal obligations claimed the zamindars from the peasants had been (2) discussed elsewhere.

Charles Elliott in his Chronicles of Oomao has given figures of land-revenue settled in that district by the 'Native Government' in 1855 and that by the British in 1861.

The figures suggest that the revenue levied by the Oudh kingdom had not by any means been more onerous than the British, particularly since by 1861 the ravages of the Mutiny and subsequent scarcities had taken their toll. Elliott's figures are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1855</th>
<th>1861</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangarman, etc. 3 parganas</td>
<td>Rs.2,99,240</td>
<td>Rs.2,93,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fattahpur Chamrasi, etc. 4 parganas</td>
<td>Rs.2,96,274</td>
<td>Rs.2,77,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurha, etc. 7 parganas</td>
<td>Rs.3,68,416</td>
<td>Rs.4,67,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rs.9,63,930</td>
<td>Rs.10,333,64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) The fiscal perquisites has been listed in some documents from late 18th and early 19th centuries from Oudh. See Khairabad documents No. 9 [no date].

(2) See chapter IV sec. I of this dissertation.

(3) Elliott, p. 104.
(b) **Assessment and collection of the land-revenue**

The system of land-revenue assessment was known to the chancellory of the Oudh government as *taskeen*, while the collection made from the payers bore the name *tahsil*. The amount of land-revenue was assessed separately for *kharif* and *rabi* harvests. The revenue payable for the autumn crops (*kharif*) was divided into 5 monthly instalments (*qists*), while for spring crops (*rabi*) the payment was made in 4 monthly instalments. The nine instalments in total, were payable at the new moons, between 11th September and 12th June of the next year. This rule was followed very strictly by the officials, as in case of the inability of the *zamindars* to pay the whole amount before the last lunar month (12th June), an 'invasion' of his village was sanctioned by the *zamindar* and soldiers were sent to attach and sell away the entire property of the defaulting land-holders and the *zamindars*.

Charles Elliott has given a vivid description of the mode of assessing the land-revenue levied on a *zamindar* holding a village. He says that the only point in determining the amount of the taxation was that it should be in accordance with the assessment of the previous year. The actual settlement with the *zamindars*

(2) Butler, pp. 100-1.
took place in the month of December, as by that time the rabi crops were well forward, and the calculations could be made easily about the expected harvest. The chakledar ordered the tahsildar to collect every land-owner of his pargana, with the village accountants and Qanun-ga by a certain date when the chakledar camped out to receive them. The scene in the tent of the chakledar is also described in detail. First of all the village accountant (patwari) used to give information as to how many areas of land of such and such crops were under cultivation. The patwaris' reports were confirmed by the qanun-ga, who, by his personal knowledge judged the condition of the crops, then the tahsildar reported on the actual realisation made from the villages during the previous year. At the same time he gave his opinion as to whether the amount of the land-revenue was to be raised this year or not. But most often suggestions of an increase came from Tahsildars out of collection with some other land-holder who might be interested in taking the farm of that village. Naturally, such suggestion when made of was contested most vehemently by the actual owners of that village who insisted that they were already ruined men and they could not pay as much amount as had been paid last year. But in case the original owner wished to retain his village in his farm, he had to agree to make the settlement with the chakledar on the raised amount of the land-revenue. Otherwise the village was 'settled' with the new land-holder who was agreeable to raising of the amount of tax.
The trick often was that next year the tahsildar would report that the village had been very much over assessed, and recommend that the amount of taxation be reduced to the original one, or even less than the actual realization of the previous year.

Corruption was thus a basic ingredient of the system of assessment, at the same time it left the land-holders to deal with the peasantry as they thought fit. Since the village was assessed as a unit there is every reason to believe that there must have been a very unequal and unjust division of the tax-burden over the peasants individually.

Unfortunately we get little information as regards the determination of the share of the tax-burden placed on the individual peasant. Butter informs us that the land-revenue was levied on the basis of the area cultivated in bighas. The reign of Nawab Sa‘madat Ali (1798-1814) marks the watershed in the agrarian history of the Oudh kingdom, as with him departed "the permanent prosperity of the country. (It) has been sacrificed to the exigencies of the year, to the supineness and extravagance of the ruling power, and to the rapacity of the temporary local authority. During that sovereign’s life, the rent of good land

(2) Butter, pp. 54 and 109-114.
varied from one to one and a half rupee per bigha; now the 
assessment is 2, 3, or 4 rupees per bigha and can seldom be fully 
levied, without ruin, both to raiyat and zamindar.

Apart from the low-revenue-rates, the peasants enjoyed
a security of the land-tenures, leases (patta) and acceptances 
(gubuliyyats) were executed to run from 3 to 5 years. These fiscal 
documents were signed, sealed and verified by the various revenue 
officials such as zamindars, ganungo, diwan, faujdar and chakidar.
But after the death of Nawab Sa'adat Ali in 1814 the entire 
picture underwent a change, as thereafter "No lease has been 
granted for more than a year and rent is fixed at such a rate—
genearly 50% above that of former times as to lease the farmer 
(peasant) little, beyond a bare subsistence."

Another method of the assessment and collection of the 
land-revenue was that the government officials made settlements 
with the local chieftains, individual proprietors of the land and 
community brotherhoods, who still continued to enjoy their heredi-
tary possessions. These local elements were expected to collect

(1) Heber, pp. 102-3
(2) Butter, p. 54
(3) Ibid, p. 49
(4) Heber, pp. 100-1
and pay a fixed amount as land-revenue to the Government. The most notable example of this class has been given by Butter in connexion with a family of Rajput ('sahib') family of Tiloin. The head of this brotherhood was Shankar Singh, styled Raja. He had to pay Rs. 7,50,000 as land-revenue on behalf of the whole Tiloin brotherhood out of the revenue he received regularly from other sub-proprietors of that fraternity. The chakledar received this amount without any difficulty. In this area the peasants were said to be quite prosperous and were assessed very lightly, i.e. the rate of land-revenue was only Re. 2/- per bigha for arable land, and Re. 1/- per bigha of newly reclaimed land. As a matter of fact it seems that since such estates had, in them, some hereditary interests a fairly good and judicious system of administration prevailed there. Butter describes Tiloin as "one pleasing oasis" (1) "amidst this wide-spread social-waste". At another place he says that, "the district of Salon (to which Tiloin belonged) has long (2) enjoyed a degree of tranquility unknown to any other part of Oudh..."

The collection of land-revenue was made in such a way as to suggest that it was "rather the levying of the tribute in a hostile country than the enforcement of the claims of lawful sovereign upon his own subjects." Force was employed to compel the

(1) Butter, pp. 109-114.
(2) Ibid., pp. 109-114.
(3) Thorton, p.37.
zamindars and other small land-holders, to cooperate with the chakledars and amils and collect and send the due revenue to the treasury at Lucknow.

Viewed from the point of view of revenue collection, land was divided into four broad categories: the khalisa estates, 

huzaur tehsil, the jirah and the amani.

The khalisa estates were those in which the revenue was collected directly by the Government officials, without the help of any intermediaries. The amount so collected was the exclusive property of the Nawab and it was spent for his house hold expenses. But during the last days of the Oudh government the chakledars after taking bribes from the interested land-holders, used to transfer such villages to them. Caption Orr wrote in 1855, that __________ not many years ago, there were hundreds, nay thousands of villages .... directly under the Crown ... But now the whole Bahraich khalisa consisting of upward 650 villages, has been given over to different Rajas, and now dwindled down to 20 or 25 villages; and all over Oudh it is the same case."

(1) Jagdish Raj : The Revenue System of the Nawabs of Oudh JESHO 1964, p.96
The **huzur tehsil** system was based on the concept of the direct relationship between the chief fiscal officers and the Crown. The officers, so designated, were free from all the superintendence of the local authorities. The tenancy rights of the peasants were comparatively secure as an oppressive chakledar could not easily think of laying hands over such villages. General Outram reported that "any acts of depredation are immediately reported to those by whose influence the village has been placed in the **huzur tehsil** and the chakledar is generally afraid to excite the hostility of diwan Balkrishna, who has its superintendence and the people about the court." Although, it appears that this system was less onerous for the peasants and convenient for the state, yet we find that its application was very limited. In 1841, the total amount of land-revenue, in Oudh, was the equivalent of £ 1½ million sterling, out of which **huzur tehsil** accounted only for £ 90,000. The reasons for its limited adoption were, of course, the greed of the revenue officials and the chakledars who preferred the contract system which assured a larger net collection and gave greater opportunities for corruption and pecuniary benefits.

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(1) Wilson's *Classory* s.v. **Huzur Tehsil**, p. 200


(3) Jagdish Raj: *JESHO* 1959, p. 97
The *ijarah* was a kind of contract between the Crown and the revenue-collectors, on the basis of which the king received, without much delay, a fixed amount as land-revenue. The *ijaradar* was at liberty to extract as much money from the *samindara* or the land-owners, as he could get. Little redress was available to the sufferers at the court as the *akhbar-nawis* seldom sent the correct information to the courts nor did the high officials pay any heed to such complaints under the influence of the gifts in money, they expected from the *ijaradars*. British officials always showed great concern over the *'ijara* system, and repeatedly urged the Nawabs to supplant this system, by the *amani* (trust) system. The results were however, disappointing, since the *amani* system proved to be as bad as the *ijara*.

The *amani* system was introduced in the reign of Ghaziuddin Hyder (1814-27) at the suggestion of the then British resident Lord Baillei. Under this system an *amil* was placed in charge of a district. He had to remit no specified sum to the state treasury, but whatever he could collect from the *samindara* and the other land-holders had to be remitted. Thus almost free of constraint, he could often enrich himself at the expense of both the Nawab

(1) Wilson's Glassory, s.v. *ijara*.
(2) Sleeman, p.
(3) Jagdish Raj: *JESHO* 1959, p. 101-
and the land-holders. The only thing an amani had to do, was to pay large bribes to the court officials, so as to be sure that his accounts would be dealt with leniently. To quote Montgomery, "The history of Oudh under the amani system is a disgraceful tale of shameless spoliation of the raiyat by all classes, from the minister who stood behind the throne to the lowest peon who served a process on the zamindar."
Consequently the attempt was given up in despair after two years of its introduction. The amani system was reintroduced on an extensive scale at the suggestion of the British officials during Nasir-ud-din Haider's reign (1827-37), but with the same result. Muhammad Ali Shah (1837-42) made vigorous efforts to maintain the system but without much success.

The amani system was once again tried on a very extensive scale by the Oudh Government after 1847, when Lord Harding visited Lucknow. But the effort simply involved a change of name, as the evils which existed under the contract system, continued. To quote Sleeman, "there is, virtually little or no change in the administration of such districts — the person who has the charge of a district under it, is obliged to pay the same gratuities to public officers and the court favourites.


he is under no more check than the contractors and the officers and the troops under him abuse their authority in the same manner (as in the contract system)." To him the amani system differed from the ijarah system just as much as wasool gabs from lakalamee gabs.

An off-shoot of the amani system was the gabs system. In this system the nazim used to assign a portion of the land from his estate to the commandant of the troops, in order to collect the revenue and pay the salaries to his troops. Since the soldiers knew it to be their only means of livelihood, they used to collect the amount with the utmost harshness. Still quite strangely this system was, in many ways, less oppressive to the peasantry than the actual collection of the land-revenue by the nazim of that area himself.

The various systems of land-revenue collection, which were tried from time to time in the Oudh kingdom, but without any particular success in running each one with any degree of efficiency, had adverse effects on the agrarian life of the kingdom. Butter observed, that "In the ill contrived and worse administered revenue system of Oudh and in the generally prevailing insecurity

(1) Sleeman, Vol. I, p.298-1
of life and property may be found abundant reasons for the present miserably depressed state of the agriculture of this kingdom.\(^{(1)}\) Another effect, was the rise of banditry in the rural districts. The peasants were forced to take to this side occupation which could sometimes prove most lucrative.\(^{(2)}\)

Lalji in his \textit{Mیراث-ال-عسک} throws all the blame of this state of affairs on the \textit{املا} (collectors) and the \textit{مصداقر} (contractors). The arbitrary manner in which they levied and collected the land-revenue, the neglect of the duty of the high officials of the state were held responsible for such a sorry state of affairs by this well-informed critic of the Oudh regime.

\(^{(1)}\) Butler, p. 48.

\(^{(2)}\) Lalji: \textit{Mیراث-ال-عسک}, MS Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh FF - 11B-22A. Also see chapter IVth Section III.

\(^{(3)}\) See Chapter IV, Sec. III.
IV

THE ZAMINDARS

(a) Position and Rights

We tend to get surprisingly little substantial information as regards the rights and privileges of the zamindars in the kingdom of Oudh in the accounts of such authorities as Butter, Sleeman and Elliott although they refer to zamindars quite frequently. Our detailed study of the subject therefore relies on a large number of Persian documents, sale-deeds, mortgage papers, etc., which have survived from that period and which considerably supplement the information in English.

To begin with, the zamindar, although a general designation for superior right holders, had many local synonyms in Oudh. In a number of Persian documents from pargana Sandilahi, sarkar Lucknow, we encounter the term satarhi, as a synonym for zamindari under the formula 'zamindari known as satarhi'.

Similarly in some sale-deeds satarhi had been used as an

(1) Donal Butter, Outlines of the Topography and Statistics of the southern Districts of Oudh and Sultanpur, Calcutta, 1839.
(2) W.H. Sleeman, A Journey through the kingdom of Oudh, London, 1858.
(3) Charles Alfred Elliott, Chronicles of Osmang, Allahabad, 1862.
(4) I have used a large number of Persian documents from the U.P. Record Office (referred to hereafter as 'Allahabad documents') and a collection of documents from Khairabad in the deptt. of History, A.U., Aligarh (referred to as the 'Khairabad Documents').
interchangeable word for milkiyat as well as for Bissi and
Do Bissi. In some documents milkiyat and samindari are
represented as two separate rights, as in the formula 'milkiyat
and samindari known as satarhi'. But at the same time we
find the formula 'milkiyat-i- samindari (property of
samindari) known as satarhi' which makes one infer that
milkiyat (property) was not a right of property of land, but
of samindari.

1783 AD). At one place the term satarhi is defined
by the formula 'milkiyat-i-hafidehi (property of the
seventeenth) known as satarhi' which suggest that
satarhi was 17th part of the total, being obviously
divided from the Hindi word satar, seventeen. See also
Irfan Habib, Agrarian System of Mughal India, Bombay, 1968,
p.139.

(1) Allahabad 292 (1176 AH/1762 AD), 435 (1110 AH/1698 AD).
(2) Allahabad 304 (1190 AH/1776 AD).
(3) Allahabad 324 (1163 AH/1749 AD).
(4) Allahabad 457 (1177 AH/1763 AD) 56 (1093 AH/1682 AD)
397 (1163 AH/1769 AD) 439 (1177 AH/1763 AD). Another docu-
ment from Sandilah, of the year 1174 AH/1760 AD) says very
clearly 'the rights of milkiyat, of satarhi and other
rights related with the samindari'; this seems to suggest
that milkiyat and samindari were two separate rights.
Allahabad 432 (1174 AH/1760 AD).
(5) The word milkiyat is defined by Wilson in his Glossary as
'possession of the rent-free lands', while giving a descrip-
tion of the rights of the samindar, he says, 'on his
(saminder's) relinquishing the management of the samindari
or being removed from it without the cause of grave-offence,
it was customary to assign him as malikana, 10% on the sadder
collection or the same rate on the net collection when held
by man or managed by the Govt. officers direct'. (W. H. Wilson,
The term malikana is, of course from malik, proprietor.
A perusal of the sale-deeds from pargana Sandilah suggest that the zamindari rights (milkiyat-e-zamindari known as satari) were quite distinct from the right of appropriation of the land-revenue (haqq-e-akhaez-e-kharaj) as both of them could be sold separately. In 1173 AH/1759 AD one Shah Akbar Ali sold all the zamindari rights in two bighas, but not the right to appropriate the land revenue, for Rs.6/-. The right to appropriate the revenue of the same two bighas was sold by the same person in 1177 AH/1763 AD in exchange for a plot of residential land (qata-e-zamin-e-sakni). This plot of residential land was sold subsequently in the same year for Rs.15/-. From these figures we may take it that, assuming the prices to represent capitalized values that the zamindar's income from his own rights was about 2/5th of the land-revenue. This was surely not an insubstantial amount of income.

As to the various items of the perquisites, privileges and allowances from which the zamindar derived his income,

(1) Allahabad Document 355 (1173AH/1759 AD).
(2) Allahabad 439 (1177 AH/1763 AD).
(3) Allahabad 443 (1177 AH/1763 AD).
(4) It appears that it had become a fashion of the day to sell the zamindari rights at one time and the right to appropriate the land-revenue subsequently. In 1174 AH/1760 AD, one Ali-ud-din sold his zamindari rights, except the right to appropriate the land-revenue of one bigha in pargana Sandilah for Rs.3/-. Subsequently the right to collect the revenue (haqq-e-akhaez-e-kharaj) was sold in exchange of a residential plot of land in 1180 AH/1766 AD. See Allahabad Document 422 (1174 AH/1760 AD), 444 (1180 AH/1766 AD).
we have to go to the individual documents and the sale-deeds. In a petition by one Amin-ud-din with the attestation of the people of Khairabad about his zamindari rights over gasaba Panwaria, pergana Haveli Khairabad, it was claimed that the petitioner enjoyed all the perquisites of the milk (property) of the village. These rights have been conveniently listed by him in detail in the petition. They comprise "the realization of one tanka and some sweetmeats as bhent from every person laying the foundations of his house, and the rate of one ser (of produce) per bigha from every one setting up "nova" (boat like scoop) to water their fields from the tank (1) of Panwari. A number of sale-deeds of the zamindaris from Sandilah and Bahraich, also list the 'proprietary perquisites' attached to zamindaris. These comprised income from ponds, channels, streams and fruit bearing as well as non-fruit bearing trees.

An interesting document from Sandilah of the year 1141 F/ shows that in some parts of Awadh a cess was levied under the name of zamindari or satarhi and Damli, quite distinct

(1) Khairabad Documents 9 (although the document has no date, Dr. Iqbal Husain assigns infers that this document belongs to the years 1858-59. This seems a probable date). See Iqbal Husain, A Calendar of Khairabad Documents; 16th-19th centuries, Islamic Culture, Hyderabad 1979, vol.-LIII no.1 p. 49 and no.11 of the same issue.

(2) Allahabad Documents 48 (1157 AH/1744 AD), 224 (114F/1733 AD), 338 (114F/1733 AD), 220 (114F/1733 AD).
from the authorised land-revenue. Under these names a grain rate of 10 sers of grain per bigha together with a cash rate (dami) at the rate of one fulus (a copper coin) per bigha was levied. The karindaes of the village (i.e. cultivators or headmen) bound themselves to deliver to the holder of these rights a quantity of grain as satarbi and an amount of dami in cash. Both these were perhaps based on the rates stated. Here we find that the rates of satarbi were much higher as compared to these of dami.

The principal source of income of the zamindar was his nankar. The zamindars were supposed to be entitled to his perquisite because of their rendering 'services' to the state in collecting the land-revenue from the peasants. The standard rate of this allowance seems to have been 10% of the total revenue collected during the 17th century. But during

(1) Damii was a rate of land-revenue assessment per bigha. See Wilson's Glossary, p.121.
(2) Allahabad Documents 299 (1154F/1746 AD). The total amount of the grain to be delivered was fixed at 50 mags for the whole year. For kharif harvest it came to 25 mags; 10 mounds of rice, 10 mounds of millets and mash 5 mounds. Of the 25 mounds to be delivered from rabi crop, the claim from wheat was 7 mounds; Gram, 8 mounds; and barley 9 mounds. As far cash Rs. 7/- were to be paid in the whole year, half of the amount at each harvest. See also Irfan Habib, p.145.
(3) Under satarbi 50 mounds of the grain, which included fine and coarse cereals, was to be delivered, while under dami Rs.7/- were to be paid.
(4) Irfan Habib, p.173.
the first half of the 19th century the more powerful samindars were able to obtain a much larger allowance in
nankar. Sleeman says that, "It (nankar) may be 10%, 20% (1)
or 100% upon the rent-roll of the estate.

Sleeman has explained how nankar could be manipulated. He cites an instance from the district of Sandilah, where the
smil was weak; the samindars refused to pay the dues on the
plea of bad season. The man who had to pay a revenue of
Rs. 10,000 could not be induced to pay 5000. He enjoyed an
acknowledged nankar of 2000 upon a recognised rent roll of
12000, and to induce him to pay something, the smil gave him
an increase upon his nankar of Rs. 1000, making the nankar (2)
3000, and reducing the revenue to 9000. At another place
Sleeman says that the, "amount of nankar once recognised,
remains the same till a new rate is recognised by the Govt." (3)
That is, not the rate, but the sum remained constant, whatever
the actual revenue.

As to the actual instances, Sleeman's diary gives us
some data on nankar in samindaris in the parganas of Nawabganj,

(1) He adds, "The nankar is a portion of the recognized rent roll,
acknowledged by the rulers to be due to the land holders for
the risk, cast, and the trouble of the management and for his
perquisite as hereditary proprietors of the soil, when the
management is assigned to another? (vol. II, pp. 121-
24).
(2) Sleeman, op. cit. vol. II, pp. 24-25.
**(1)**

Waseergunj, Munkapur and Bahmanee Paer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the pargana</th>
<th>A- (Rent-roll)</th>
<th>B-(Nankar)</th>
<th>C- (Balance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nawabgunj, Waseergunj, Mahadeva</td>
<td>1,08,000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>76,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Munkapur</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bahmanee Paer</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these cases, then, out of a total rent-roll of Rs. 1,60,000, the amount of nankar came to 47,000 or 29.5% of the total.

While giving a description of the estate of Seo Buksh Singh of Loharpar, district Khairabad, Sleeman says, "Itts rent-roll is now estimated ..... at 54,640 out of which is deducted (2) a nankar of 17,587, leaving a Government demand only 37,053". Here also the amount of nankar amounts to about 31% of the total revenue realization.

The family of Dursham Singh paid to the Awadh Government a revenue of 1,88,000. The rent-roll, recognised in the exchange

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(1) These parganas were transferred to British Government under the terms of the treaty concluded in 1801 AD; and retransferred to Awadh Government by the treaty of 1816. *(Ibid.* vol. I, p.128.)

(2) *Ibid*, vol. II, p.120.
was Rs.2,56,000; and the nankar was Rs.68,000 or 27% of the total revenue.

The largest zamindari of Baiswara was Daundiakhera held by one Rambakhsh Singh. The annual revenue was Rs.3,00,000. In ordinary years the amount of the nankar was Rs.45,000 but in favourable years the amount of additional profit obtained by the zamindar was about Rs.100,000 or 150,000.

Thus it can be inferred that the zamindar's share in the land-revenue ranged from 20% to 35% of the gross land-revenue.

It appears that rent free villages were also granted to the zamindars for meeting their nankar claims. Sleeman says of one Muhammad Husain Khan of the Bharwara estate that, "He holds twelve villages, rent-free as nankar and pays revenue for all the rest that compose his share of the great estate." On such nankar villages the zamindars had apparently no obligation to pay anything to the Government.

Apart from the nankar and the fiscal perquisites, the zamindar had some other sources of income as well. These were

\begin{itemize}
  \item [(2)] Butters, op.cit., pp.53-4.
  \item [(3)] Sleeman, op.cit., vol.II, pp.96-102.
\end{itemize}
Salt and Saltpetre were extracted and refined on a large scale in almost every district of Oudh. These items were extracted from the nitrous soil by a special caste of people known as Nuniyas or Luniyas. Butter tells us that, "when luniyas, or the salt-manufacturers pitch upon a spot where they think salt water is likely to be found, they obtain the zamindar’s permission to sink a well, by engaging to pay him annually 50 Rs. for the water."

Another source of income of the zamindar was the duty (rent) imposed over the markets (hats) and fairs (melas) which were held within the limits of their 'estates'. Butter says of the hat of Karaheya bazar that it was the greatest hat of chakla Saloon and was attended by about one laca of people. This hat was managed by a chaudhari who resides on the spot and pays Rs.8000 a year to the zamindar".

(1) The chief occupation of the nuniyas was the making of salt and saltpetre, and their population in every district of Awadh was quite considerable. Cf. W. Crooks, The Tribes and Castes of North-Western India, Delhi, 1975, vol. III, pp. 386-395.

(2) Butter, op.cit., p.73. It is said of Rae Bareli district that "in former days large quantities of salt and saltpetre were manufactured in the pargana of Khiron, Sareni, and Dalman. The manufacture of the former ceased at annexation". (H.R. Nevill, District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh [Rae Bareli], Lucknow 1923 vol. XXX IX, pp.46-47).

(3) Ibid., p.92.
The income so raised was partly spent by the zamindars upon employing armed men, maintaining their position and enforcing their claims.

Zamindars of any status always had a mud-fort (garhi), preferably surrounded by jungle, to protect themselves against hostile neighbours or royal officials. In 1850 Sleeman estimated that 889 square miles of forest was maintained by the zamindars and the ta'alluqadar throughout the kingdom of Oude.

It appears that every zamindar used to keep a number of armed-retainers ready for any kind of service. An anonymous article published in the Calcutta Review in 1845 estimated that, "there are not less than 100,000 soldiers in the service of zamindars". These dwarfed the number of the royal troops.

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(1) We are told by Sleeman that in the, "midst of these forests, the land-holders generally maintained one or more mud-forts, surrounded by a ditch and a dense fence of living bamboos, through which cannon shot cannot penetrate."
(Sleeman, vol. II, pp.279-80.)

which are said to have been less than half this number.

**Zamindari** in Oudh, as elsewhere was associated with certain castes. Lalji in *mirat-al-ausa* (1855–56) informs us that among the Hindu inhabitants of the kingdom of Oudh, the Rajputs were most numerous and were in possession of most of the **zamindaris** and **ta’alluqadari**. This fact is said to have

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(i) But even this is perhaps an exaggeration. The following clause was inserted in 1768 in the already existing treaty concluded in 1765 between the British and Oudh: "His highness (Shuja-ud-daulah) shall not entertain a number of forces exceeding 35,000 men, whether sepoys, cavalry, peon, artillerymen, rocketmen or troops of any denomination." Further it was held that "Shuja-ud-Daulah aforesaid and his successors shall abide by the articles of this treaty ---". As a result of this new article in the treaty Shuja-ad-Daulah, "promise to disband all the troops ...... exceeding the number of 35,000 horse and foot..." *(Atkinson, Vol.II, No.XXV, pp.70-71).* But even this number was further reduced in 1801 as it was held that "four battalions of infantry, one battalion of muskeens and mureeets, 2000 horsemen and to the number of 300 galun das, (Nawab) shall dismiss the remainder of his troops" *Ibid*, pp. 73-74. It appears however, that these terms of the treaty were not followed strictly as in 1847 Lord Harding warned Nawab Wajid Ali Shah against keeping a large army this being contrary to the treaty of 1801. Harding alleged that Nawab maintained a force consisting of 53,000 men. But in 1849 the royal troops are said to have numbered 58,245 men. *Cf. G.D.Bhatnagar, Awadh under Wajid Ali Shah*, Varanasi 1969, pp.221-222 and p.195.
made the Rajputs very arrogant and to cause the trouble throughout the kingdom.

The domination of particular castes was however subject to change from time to time. The Nawab's Government might on rare occasions assert its strength and overthrow a clan. As Sleeman tells us, "He (Shah Rana Ata of Salon) gets from the king of Oude 12 villages, rent free, in perpetuity; and they are said to yield him 25,000 Rupees a year.... This eleemosynary endowment was granted, about 60 years ago, by the then sovereign Asaf-ud-daulah. The land had belonged to a family of Kumpureea Rajputs, who were ousted for contumary or rebellion, I believe ...." Similarly money might subvert the older domination through purchase. A perusal of the sale-deeds from pargana Sandilah suggests that several Rajput zamindars sold their possessions to the Muslims, over a period of time.

(1) Lalji, Mirat-al-ausa,MS, ff. 74b-75b.
(2) The application of the general law of the inheritance might sometimes be responsible for the weakening of the caste-ties. Such was the case in Tilain, where a large estate was divided into small holdings. Cf. Butter, pp.109-114.
(3) Sleeman, vol.I,p.232. We know that this family of Muslim mystics of Salon was already in possession of madad-e-maash grants made by emperor Aurangzeb in 1086 AH/1675 and in 1090 AH/1679 AD. See my paper, Two Madad-e-Maash Faman of Aurangzeb from Awadh. Indian History Congress Proceeding Waltair 1979 pp.302-314.
(4) Allahabad Documents, 228 (1141 AH/1728 AD) 239(1141 AH/1728 AD). This evidence is undoubtedly rather early for our period.
Quite often the zamindari rights in Oudh were defined in terms of the bighas and not as particular portion of the village. For example one Shaikh Jarullah sold his zamindari rights of 5 bigha and 15 biswa for a sum of Rs.17/- and annas 4 in the year 1176 AH/1762 AD. It appears that the general law of succession, as against the law of primogeniture, was applicable in most zamindars. In the course of time the 'estate' must have been divided into small holdings among the numerous heirs of the zamindars.

The zamindari rights were frequently combined with the madad-e-maash rights at least by muslims. In a petition, presented by one Ghulam Haider and others before Qazi Muhammad Nasir of Sandilal, it is claimed by the petitioners that the 'milkiyat-e-zamindari' known as satarhi' of village Kondwa, pargana Sandilal, was purchased by their predecessors and that their ancestors had madad-e-maash rights over the said village.

(1) Allahabad Documents, 292(1176 AH/1762 AD) 326 (1190 AH/1776 AD) 379(1183 AH/1769 AD) 444(1180 AH/1766 AD) 443 (1177 AH/1763 AD) 439(1177 AH/1763 AD) 366(1173 AH/1759 AD).
(2) Ibid., 292(1176 AH/1762 AD).
(3) Due to this very reason, it appears that the size of the holding of the zamindari rights had diminished to such an extent that it was sometimes only of two bighas.
(4) Ibid., 362 (Although this document has no date, the person Shah Muhammad Akbar had sold his milkiyat and zamindari rights to others during the period ranging between 1173 AH/1759 AD to 1190 AH/1176 AD. Probably this document too belongs to that period).
in entirely according to Imperial orders. The petitioners complain that one Shah Muhammad Akbar, a co-sharer of the zamindari rights had now mortgaged the village, without informing the petitioners to some Rajput zamindars and mustajirs (revenue-farmers). This petition is important as it suggests that the madad-e-mahal and zamindari rights were tending to be combined. It also shows how zamindars were prepared to acquire other zamindaris by obtaining mortgages.

Numerous surviving sale-deeds and mortgage deeds of the zamindari from pargana Sandilah and Bahraich make it clear that the zamindari was a freely saleable right. A full-scale market in zamindari rights (not properly perhaps a land market) had developed in Oudh. Many Rajputs sold their hereditary zamindaris to Muslims. A sale-deed of zamindari rights of the village Sikandarpur, pargana Sirra, sarkar Khairabad records that the village was sold to one Murattab Khan by the Gaur Rajput proprietors, for Rs.560/-. Another document records the sale of the village Rampur known as Chandpur by its Gaur Rajput zamindars to the same Murattab Khan for Rs.1124/-. Similarly Rajput co-proprietors of the zamindari

(1) Ibid., 232 (1141 AH/1728 AD).
(2) Ibid., 238 (1141 AH/1728 AD).
rights of the village Patwaripur, pargana Sandilah sarker
Lucknow, mortgaged the entire village to one Chaudhari
Banwari Lal in default of Rs.520/- and 13 annas for the year
1138 F/1730 AD, since the zamindars were unable to pay-back
the whole amount, they sold the village to the same Chaudhari
(1) in payment of the debt already contracted.

To sum-up, it appears that the zamindars in the state
of Oudh occupied a crucial position in rural economy. In itself
their right was proprietary, hereditary and saleable; but it
was not a right to property in land. For one thing, it was
distinct from the right to collect the land-revenue. The
zamindars' perquisites varied from area to area. Sometimes
zamindar rights were combined with madad-e-maash rights.
Their income, from their own sources, was often much higher
than was indicated by their authorized rights of nankar.
The amount so raised was spent lavishly in maintaining the
armed retainers and their forts. Thus, the zamindars formed
a part of the ruling class of Oudh, though formally they did
not constitute a part of its administration.

(1) Ibid., 411 (1149 AH/1736 AD). Here we find no difference
between the amount for which the village was mortgaged
and for which it was sold later. Perhaps the amount
of interest too had been added to the principal.
Since one hears so often of ta'alluqadar of Awadh, it is necessary to remember that, by the standard definition, e.g. the one given by Wilson's Dictionary the ta'alluqadar was a zamindar, who collected revenues from adjacent zamindaris. Thus essentially the ta'alluqadar were a species of zamindars. As Charles Elliott puts it, "the origin of ta'alluqadari possessions arises in two ways; by hereditary and by auction rights; but it treats all ta'alluqadars equally as absolute zamindars." But it seems that these were those ta'alluqadars who were the heads of their brotherhoods and collected the entire revenue due to their clan for payment to the Government, as was the case with the Raja of Tiloiin. This chief used to pay Rs. 7,50,000 to the Government on behalf of the entire clan.

(2) Elliott, op.cit., p.156. Mr Thompson theorised in Calcutta Review in 1849 that the ta'alluqadar was not just a middle man,"previously unconnected with the spot and permitted by the native Government to realize, on his own account the share of the produce otherwise due to the state." This was severely criticized by Charles Elliott on the ground that the native Government never appointed anyone besides the zamindar to collect the revenue, because the true ta'alluqadar was never unconnected with the village, but most closely and for many generations connected with it.' Cf. Ibid. pp.151-3.
(3) Butler, pp. 109-114.
(b) **The armed strength and the role of the zamindars.**

The genesis of the zamindari right in Awadh, historically speaking is connected with the demotion of various castes and ethnic groups in a particular area. The right so created was quite independent of any royal action, although at later period some political expediency might have forced a post facto recognition to such right by the sovereigns. A study of the actual process through which a caste, hitherto insignificant in an area, has succeeded in establishing its sway in that area will be fascinating as it will help us in understanding how caste-tie operated in a pre-modern society.

Lalji informs us that among the Hindu inhabitants of the kingdom of Awadh, during the decade before annexation of 1856 the Rajputs were most numerous and were in possession of the most of the zamindaris and ta'aliuqadaris. This fact made them very arrogant and hence they use to create the trouble throughout the kingdom. There arrogance had reached such a point that the Rajputs had become disrespectful even to the Brahmins and used to openly defy all religious customs.

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The domination of a caste over an area was most oftenly weakened or even broken due to division among numerous heirs. The large zamindari estates were divided into small holdings, thus paving the way for their being usurped by other neighbouring powerful groups. Charles Elliott says, "The Rawats are another class, who are peculiar to the district of Oonao—. They are the 5th son of Raja Tilok Chand, who at his death gave them for their inheretence the pargana of Harsi, which is called Botana or Rawtana from them. At present however they only possess 3 out of the 12 tuppahs. Faced with such division attempts would still be made to keep the clan together. A very interesting instance is recorded by Elliott again, where we find that many members of the Purihar caste having small holdings entered into an alliance, forming some sort of confederation against the oppressions of the chakliedara and other powerful neighbours. The Purihar brotherhood, represented by Gulab Singh for all formal purposes, though each segment of the confederation was free to appropriate and extract the land-revenue assigned to it as its share.

There is another instance where we find the caste-ties played their role and hence a dominant caste was able to establish

(1) C.A. Elliott, Chronicles of Oonao, pp. 63-5.
(2) Ibid., pp. 59-61.
its hegemony over an area to which hitherto it had been quite a stranger. Elliott says of Raja Gauri Shankar of Mauranwan that in 1800 AD he was not a land-owner at all, and now (1861 AD) his ta'alluga pays Rs.1,18,900 .....{1}

Although such amassing of the zamindari estates could have been possible due to many factors, the basic underlying factor appears to be strong caste-solidarity.

The 'military' element was another constant feature of zamindari right. Sleeman noticed the presence of forest in the different parts of Awadh kingdom. About one he says, "In the midst of this jungle, the land holders have generally one or more mudforts surrounded by ditch and a dense fence of living bamboos, through which cannon shot can not penetrate, and man can enter only by narrow and intricate pathways. They are always too green to be set fire to, and being within range of match-look........ They can not be cut down by a besieging force."  

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(1) Elliot, b. 1835.

(2) Earlier we are told by Sleeman, "That the clearing of these forests was not allowed by the land holders. If any one tries to do so, he does it at the peril of his life." (Vol.II, pp.279-90). Bishop Heber also confirms this when he says that the stranger zamindars built mud-forts, the poor raiyat planted bamboos, and thorny jungles round their villages. (p.83).
As to the actual number of the retainers kept by the individual zamindars in the kingdom of Awadh (1801-56) no estimates are furnished by contemporaries. Even Sleeman's diary of his tour, which is otherwise most copious, contains very little information on this subject. However by taking note of the actual instances this deficiency can be met. Butter while giving a description of the town Nain, pargana Salon, comments that, it contained "among a population of 10,000, no fewer than 5000 to 6000 fighting men (kamar bandhney waley) of whom 3000 are expressly employed by the Thakurs or gentry in collecting the revenue and fighting with the chakledar when necessary. "At another place we are informed that, "Rampur, Dhingons and Deva are zamindaris, held by three brothers, who each pay regularly 10,000 Rs. of revenue, but still think it prudent to be prepared with a force of 900 men to repel any interference on the part of the chakledar." Matchlock men were also maintained by these local chiefs. We are informed that "Barthor, in Bainswara is the residence of a Thakur, Kesri Singh Gaur, who paid 15000 Rs. as of the revenue and maintained 100 matchlock men." While Darshan Singh, the chakledar of Rudauli made an attack in 1836 on the estate of Pali, we are informed that the zamindar Sheo Dat Singh went off

(1) Butter, p.51.
(3) Ibid., p.10/
with 800 followers to the neighbouring jangals. However, it appears that the number of the armed retainers kept by these individual land-holders depended upon the size of the clan and the frequency of the conflicts with revenue authorities which forced them to maintain a contingent. The size of the holdings or the amount of the revenue to be paid by the individual zamindars to the Government were not necessarily good indicators of the number of the armed retainers maintained by zamindars.

Apart from this 'direct evidence' about the armed strength of the zamindars in Oudh, there is some indirect evidence which comes from information relating to individual zamindars. Ghulam Hazrat was a relatively small zamindar, possessing the estate of Jhuruapura and two 'garhais' one in the Para and another in Sarai. These two forts were strong enough for him to resist the nawabi forces. Moreover, neighbouring

(1) Ibid., p. 52 – We are earlier informed that, "6 miles south of Pali is the Rampur jangal, also a place of refuge for oppressed or refractory zamindars". Ibid., p. 9.

(2) Raja Shankar Singh of Tiloin possessed the largest zamindari as he used to pay Rs. 7,50,000 to the Government, still the total number of the armed retainers kept by him never exceeded 3000 men. His nephew, the zamindars of Deva and Dhingons, used to pay only Rs. 200,000 as land-revenue, but still held the command over 9,000 armed retainers. Ibid., pp. 109-114.
land-holders were often ready to support him against the chakledar. It seems that an understanding or alliance existed among the zamindars of the area. This was partly because of fear of Ghulam Hazrat, for he took possession of many neighbouring estates by the use of force, and most ironically the royal forces failed to extend any protection to those who were thus deprived of their possessions.

Sleeman endorsed a petition by one Karamat Ali, whose father Basharat Ali was the contractor of the pargana Nawabgunj, and was subsequently driven away by Ghulam Hazrat. The remarkable aspect of this episode is that Basharat Ali used to pay Rs.1,35,000, to the treasury, and even such a powerful man was worsted by the holder of a small estate. This was probably because of the numerous armed retainers kept by Ghulam Hazrat. Another petition presented to Colonel Sleeman was by one Sita Ram, a Brahman zaminder of pargana Satrikh, who had been driven out of his hereditary estate by Ghulam Imam, the zaminder of Jaggar and a close ally of Ghulam Hazrat. Here again we are informed that the nasm of Khairabad had under him 3400 fighting men and the nasm of Bahraich had under

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(2) Ibid., pp. 28-30.
him 4000 fighting men, but even they failed to repel the depredations of Ghulam Imam. Another daring act by Ghulam Hazrat was to take possession of the estates of Galha by driving away the hereditary Rathor zamindar, Bhawanee Singh. After some time Girdha Singh, the revenue-contractor of the pargana, re-established Bhawanee Singh. But ultimately he was driven away and the king's officials failed to give him any protection. Hence the son of Bhawanee Singh was a soldier in the Bengal army, presented the petition to the British Government for abstaining justice.

The above instances go to suggest that at least during the last decades of Oudh dynasty the armed power of the individual zamindars and the tal'lugadar had grown so much that even the royal forces helpless to face them. Consequently, the sufferers were forced to seek help from the British Government, thus providing an excellent opportunity to the East India Company for intervention and for denunciations of mis-government in Awadh.

The position and function of the zamindar in agrarian society was quite different from those of the revenue official.

(1) Ibid., pp. 28-30.

(2) Ibid., pp. 20-22 vol. I. The petitioner belonged to the 63rd regiment of the native infantry.
The latter had to perform merely his duty of assessment and the collection of the revenue, while a zamindar had various hereditary perquisites apart from a recognised amount of nankar. Hence in order to keep intact his perquisites, which could come only if peasants had some wherewithall left after paying revenue, the zamindar tended to protect to some extent the interest of the peasants. On the other hand a chakledar or the revenue contractor always tried to raise the amount of annual revenue demanded from the peasants through the zamindars. This was often resisted by the zamindars along with his retainers. But one should not lose sight of the equal number of the instances when zamindars refused to pay the Government demand as previously fixed or asked for a higher amount of the nankar for themselves.

An 'improving' zamindar in the prevailing circumstances was a rare right. Such a zamindar was not the one who improved

(1) We find that when any land-holder was forced to follow a rebellious course due to the demands of the chakledars he was frequently supported by the villagers who supplied both men and material. We find many instances of zamindars and villagers fighting together against the royal forces. But to our surprise, no instance is found in the records of our period when the villagers rebelled against a zamindar or sided with the chakledar against a zamindar.

(3) Elliott: op.cit., pp. 139-141.
agriculture, but one who was moderate in collecting revenue and effective in providing protection against lawlessness. Butter, describing the administration of Tiloin in the district of Salon observed, "Amid this widespread social-waste, there is one pleasing oasis presented to eye, in the small district of Salon which has for many generations under the patriarchal Government of a Chattari family. The family was established so well that even the ohakledar dared not demand a higher amount of the revenue, "The revenue paid by him for the whole Tiloin zamindari is 7,50,000 Rs. which the ohakledar receives regularly and without having any pretence for, or making any attempt at undue exactions..." The Tiloin Raj therefore "enjoyed a degree of tranquility unknown to any other part of Oude. No mela, bat, town, village or traveller has been plundered by either ohakledar, neighbouring zamindar or other depredator. Murder is unknown ----- even in the country immediately surrounding the Tiloin estate, private robbery is unknown...." A similar situation prevailed in Koraheya bazar where "A very good order seems

(2) Ibid., pp. 109-114.
(3) Ibid., pp. 109-114.
to be preserved at melas and hats, no notorious instance of open robbery having of late occurred at any of them." Similarly at Nain the Thakurs showed some benevolence to their peasants; consequently, "their raiyat held extensive farms, varying from 20 to 100 bighas and never were heavily assessed by the Thakurs, when the chakledar demanded no more than the usual revenue." These instances suggest that some zamindars at least tried to maintain good administration in their estate and could also show some sympathy with the peasantry.

The zamindars seem to have certain judicial rights as well. Butter tells us of Tiloin that, "when similar i.e. boundary disputes occur within the Tiloin boundary, they are instantly put down by the Rajas and speedy justice afforded." Apart from these cases of civil nature, criminal offences were also investigated by the Rajas. But the convicts were sent to Lucknow for punishment. If they found it difficult to investigate the case independently, they used to ask for the help from the Lucknow darbar. This system of despending justice was a recognised system by the Government, as "zamindars were by

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(1) Ibid., p. 92.
(2) Ibid., p. 92.
(3) Ibid., p. 92.
(4) Ibid., p. 92.
Saadat Khan held answerable for any theft, robbery, murder, or other act of violence, that might be committed within the limits of their estate. One can say that the role of the zamindar in a village was thus of a land-revenue collector, armed chief patriarch, and judge, all rolled into one.

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(1) Ibid., pp. 105-6.
REVENUE GRANTS

During the Mughal period there was a well established system through which the king transferred his right to collect the land-revenue and other fiscal perquisites from a given area of land for the life time of the transferree or grantee or in perpetuity. Such grants were known as madad-e-ma'ash or a'imma. Apart from these, cash-grants were also made in order to support certain individuals, or institutions. In Oudh during our period this system inherited from the Mughal Empire continued with perhaps only some variations. At pargana level the administration of such grants continued to be looked after by the muttawallis and amils. Some persons were also given cash-grants in the form of rozina or salana payable out of revenue collections. During the later days of the Oudh kingdom, cash allowances were also sanctioned out of interest on deposits and loans placed by the Nawabs with the East India Company.

As a matter of general practice the madad-e-ma'ash grants in land were initially made out of cultivable waste, so far

(1) Irfan Habib, Agrarian System of Mughal India, p. 298.
(2) C.A.Elliott, Chronicles of Ongole, p. 111
(3) The revenue-officials were directed by the court to send the specified amount to the grantees without any delay. See Jais Documents, Nos. 11,12, and 13.
exempted from land revenue (kharij-e- j'amah); this was 
(1) done so as to avoid loss of revenue. Sometimes however 
a portion of cultivated-land was also assigned together 
(2) with cultivable-waste. But once granted the area would 
naturally have become cultivated and so confirmatory 
(3) documents show the grant-lands to be largely cultivated.

The revenue-grants during the Mughal period conferred 
no proprietary rights over the land to the grantees. We do 
find many confirmatory farmanas issued by the emperor allotting 
the original grant, in whole or in part, to the heirs of the 
deceased; and this suggests hereditary succession of some 
sort. But the confirmations were subject to the actual 
(4) physical control of the land. Moreover the distribution of 
the share among the heirs was made according to orders of the

(1) The standard formula used in documents was samin-utfada 
laig-e-sira'at kharij-e- ja'mah, Allahabad Documents Nos. 
8, 28, 73, 163, 158, 157 and 162.

(2) Ibid, 162. It is stated quite specifically that out 
of 100 bighas of land granted to Smt. Bibi Sandal in 
sarkar of Bahraich, 1/4 was cultivated (masru'a) while 
3/4 was cultivable-waste (utfada laig-e-sira'at).

(3) Ibid, 154. A confirmatory grant, in pargana of Onao, 
made to the heirs of the original grantees comprised of 
4279 bighas and 4 biswas of cultivated land.

(4) In all texts of the farmanas, conferring any old grant upon 
the heirs of the grantee, the pre-condition is laid that 
the heirs should be in actual physical control of the land 
and that it has not been assumed by the officials concerned 
before the confirmation (shart-e-qabs-e-tasarruf wa 
adam basyaft) Jais Documents nos. 8 and 9.
emperor, and not according to the shari'at law of inheritance. However it seems that by the time of the nawab-wazire the grantees acquired some proprietary rights over these grants. In a petition from the second half of the 18th century, presented by one Ghulam Haider of pargana Sandilah before the qazi, it was alleged that the madad-e-ma'ash right and zamindari rights of village Mundwa had been mortgaged by one Shah Muhammad Akbar. A case of direct sale of a'imma (madad-e-ma'ash) land is recorded in the year 1177 AH/1763 AD in pargana Sandilah. This suggested an almost total conversion of revenue-grant into transferable right.

Holders of revenue grants tended to acquire zamindari rights in their grant-lands in course of time. In 1858 one Aminuddin presented a petition with the attestation of thirty

(1) Thus Dr Noman A Siddiqi's assumption (Mughal land-revenue administration, Aligarh 1970, pp.182-33) that madad-e-ma'ash grants were the core of Muslim village zamindaries is open to question. The shari'at law, a basic ingredient of the proprietorship did not apply to these grants. Similarly the sale and the mortgage of such lands could not take place openly. The formula nasl nan ba'd nasl nan wa batn nan ba'd batn nan was used quite rarely in such grants.

(2) Allahabad Documents No.362. Although this document had no date, still we can assign it to period 1177 AH/1763 AD since papers of Shah Muhammad Akbar relates to this year.

(3) Here the zamindari right was sold first, and then the right to levy land-tax derived from imperial orders conferring a'imma grants on the ancestors of the sellers. Allahabad Documents, No.457.
people of Khairabad about his proprietary and hereditary
claims over a village, Panwaria. He claimed all the perquisites
and privileges previously claimed by the samindars. An
ancestor of this petitioner, Shaikh Da'im had been granted
only five bigahas of khud-kashta land as milk for the specific
purpose of the maintenance of a mosque, khangah and graves.
There was not a single word about the proprietary rights of
the grantees in the original grant. From this small beginning,
however, the heirs had acquired proprietary rights over the
entire village. Apparently the taxity that came about during
the later period of the empire and under the Nawab-wazirs,
permitted such prelensions to grow.

During the Mughal period there were certain classes
of people who were considered particularly eligible for
receiving madad-e-ma'ash grants. However, there were no hard
and fast rules as to exclude some one from the category of the

(1) Khairabad Documents, No.9.
(2) Khairabad Documents, No.3.
(3) The petition of 1858 was submitted perhaps before a
settlement officer to assert the proprietary rights of
the petitioners or the original proprietors might have
been extinguished. However the chances of fraud seems
to be minimal as the signatories belonged to various
social groups. See Iqbal Husain, A Calendar of the 16th-
19th century documents from Khairabad Islamic Culture
'deserving people'. The criteria do not seem to have changed much under the Oudh rulers, from a perusal of the surviving records it transpires that theologians, scholars, widows and women were the most common recipients of the grants. Cash grants were given to more or less the same categories of persons as were the land-grants. It had various denominations as rozina yomiya mahana and salana. The specified amount was to be paid to the grantees by the revenue-collectors from the pargana treasury without any hindrance. The modus-operandi seems to be that the amount specified as annual might have paid at the time of the annual collection of the land-revenue. But the rozina or yomiya or daily allowance could hardly have been paid out daily. Naturally this class of grantees lived at the greatest risk. Often the grantees even refused to comply with the orders of payment. Some grantees had to approach the court to get their grants shifted from one pargana to another. Perhaps this state of affairs was due to the unwillingness of the grantees to pay out of the collections.

(1) Allahabad Documents, 8(1081 AH/1670 AD) 13(1165 AH/1751 AD) 31(1194 AH/1780 AD) 37(1199 AH/1784 AD) 73(1200 AH/1785 AD) 52(1195 AH/1780 AD).

(2) Jails-11,13. One Ghulam Muhiuddin was assigned an amount of 4 annas daily from the collections of the pargana Nasirabad. The original grantees were assigned 2 rupees as daily (yomiya) allowance from pargana Amethi but due to the non-realisation of this amount the grantees's share was shifted to pargana Nasirabad. Another grant was made to Muhammad Baqar for 1 re. 4 annas from pargana Nasirabad. He, too, had been earlier assigned 2 Rs. daily from pargana Amethi, but later due to non-realisation of the amount, this grant too was shifted to pargana Nasirabad.

(3) Jails, 11.

(4) Ibid., 12.

(5) Ibid., 12.
beyond a particular limit, or short fall in revenue (1) collection did not permit them to meet such claims.

Land and cash-grants were also made for the benefit and upkeep of religious and charitable institutions. But in the Oudh kingdom, there seems to have been practically no security against the partial or total resumption of these grants except for incumbents who were 'zarivalas' that is who had some 'force' or supporter at the darbar "sufficient to overawe the chakledar and zamindar." The Oudh rulers, from their shi'ite learnings made large donations for the maintenance of shi'ite establishments. This does not mean that the Sunni establishments and the Hindu institutions were denied all patronage. Alongwith Imambaras, the Sunni khanqah also received grants. The family of Sunni mystics established at Salon by patronised by the Nawab-Wazirs. Asaf-ud-Daulah had granted twelve villages sent-free, in perpetuity to this establishment by expelling the Kanhpuria Rajputs from the area. This grant was in addition to the

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(1) Pargana of Amethi was under the control of the Kanhpuria Rajputs, and it's quite possible that this area was disturbed (sortalab), so that there were difficulties in collecting the assessed revenue.

(2) Butter, pp. 48-9.


grants made by Aurangzeb much earlier. The family continued to enjoy this grant throughout the period of the Oudh kingdom. W.H. Sleeman paid a visit to this "eleemosynary establishment" while he was making a tour of the kingdom during 1849-50.

At Bhadarsa in Pachhamrat, there was a charitable endowment made by Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah. It had a land-grant yielding Rs. 15,000 annually to be distributed among the faqirs and Bairagis. At Itaya in Mansurjung, 100 bighas of tenant-free land were attached to the establishment dedicated to Abdul Qadir Ghous Asam Dastgir.

The large Hindu establishment known as Hanumangarhi in the city of Faizabad was patronised by Nawab Shuja-ud-Daulah and "continued in a flourishing condition up to the present time, unmolested by chakledar or zamindar." It had a revenue-free grant of Rs. 50,000 and no Muslim was allowed to enter its premises. The estate was managed by the Bairagis, and only a moderate rent was levied per bigha. In the city of Ayodhya

(1) See my paper, Two madad-e-ma'ash ferman of Aurangzeb from Awadh, Proceedings Indian History Congress, 1979, pp. 302-14.
(3) Butter, pp. 162-3.
(4) Martin, p. 352.
(5) Butter, pp. 162-3.
(6) Ibid., pp. 162-3.
('Awadh') there were two Hindu establishments of importance. Ram Parsad—khana was occupied by 200-250 bairagi and enjoyed a revenue of 25,000 Rs. The other Bindiya Kund had a total rent-free grant of Rs.10,000 and maintained 200

A large yogi establishment at Gorakhpur had a rent-free land grants in three entire villages and three detached portions. The grants had been originally made by Shuja-ud-Daulah, but continued in later period. Such institutions must have also existed elsewhere in Oudh, although details are not available. In addition, it was said, "much charity is distributed by the Brahmanas out of the small allotment of the land granted to them, for this purpose by the zamindars."

The revenue-grants were looked after by the ecclesiastical officers posted at Lucknow. At pargana level, "a special officer was appointed to manage their (women and children grantees) land's for them. He was called the mutwalli." It appears that he had no special allowance for discharging his duties from the state treasury. Instead, "he received 10% 

(1) Ibid., pp. 162-3.
(2) Ibid., pp. 162-3.
(4) Dutt, pp. 162-3.
(5) Elliott, p. 111.
Grants appear to have been quite expensive. As Elliott says in the regana of Bangarman only the mutawalli was in charge of more than three thousand acres; but there was no individual grant consisting more than a hundred and fifty acres.

The Oudh rulers advanced loans to or placed deposits with the East India Company from time to time. These loans and deposits were irrefundable, and the successive rulers could claim only interest upon them at the rate of 4% or 5% per annum. The amount of interest was always earmarked for some specific purpose and was often assigned in alms. It was remitted directly by the Resident to the persons named by the king. In a deed of deposit of rupees twelve lacs, it was agreed in 1839 that the amount of interest which was Rs. 48,000 would be paid to a board of trustees. In the scheme of expenditure Rs. 30,000 was to be spent for the maintenance and upkeep of the building of Husainabad wabarak (the Isambara). A sum of Rs. 7,200 was to be distributed among the custodians who were to look after the maintenance of the mausoleum.

(1) Ibid., p. iii.
(2) Elliott, p. iii.
(3) Aitchinson, vol. II. The deeds of deposit had always made it explicit that the loans as well as the deposits were in perpetuity and they could not be withdrawn. Nos. XLIV, XLIX, XLVII and L.
If any of the pensioners or custodians died without heirs, this share was to be transferred for the expenses of the Hussainabad mubarak and to the family of the mutawalli, Rafeeq-ud-Dinlah Bahadur and Ameenullah Khan Bahadur. In 1825, it was stipulated that the amount of interest occurring on a deposit of Rs. one crore placed with East India Company, was to be utilised for the maintenance of the building of the new imambara at Lucknow, Najaf-e-Ashraf and Karbala-e-Mualla. A portion of the interest was to be utilised as pension to state officials and for the remuneration of the mutawallis of the above-named mausoleums. In case a pensioner died without heirs, his share was also to be used for the upkeep of the maintenance of the mausoleum.

Some other charitable purposes were also served out of the interest derived from these deposits. In 1840, a deed of trust was executed by the king, whereby the interest amounting to Rs.17,245/- per annum was to be utilized in order to provide food and drugs to the sick in the hospital established at Lucknow by the previous Nawab. Similarly in 1833 King Naseer-ud-Din Haider made a deposit of Rs. three lacs with the East India Company; the

(1) Ibid., vol.II, No.XLIX, pp. 143-5.
(2) Ibid., vol.II, No. XLIV, pp. 132-34.
monthly amount of interest thereon, viz. Rs. 1000/- was to be distributed among the poor and physically handicapped residing in Lucknow. The entire disbursement was however, to be made by the Resident, who was accountable to none.

The autonomous chiefs paying tribute to the Oudh rulers, and the local zamindars also used to make grants of revenue-free lands. The beneficiaries were mostly Brahmans, especially the men of learning (pandits) and physicians (baidas). Butter informs us that, "In Salan and Partapgarh baidas are found at every six or eight miles and are Brahmans of different denominations. They very frequently are supported by grants of lands from rajas and other zamindars, to the extent of from 20 to 400 bighas". Similarly Bennett while discussing the proprietary rights of autonomous rajas remarks that the "second direct proprietary act was the allotment of small patches of uncultivated land chiefly to Brahmans." Grants, were also made to astrologers, as also family priests. Wealthy zamindars made small gifts of rent-free land to Brahmans, as aids to subsistence. The education of the young among Hindus was almost

(1) Butter, p. 175.
(2) W.C. Bennett, A report on the family history of the chief clans of Roy Bareli district, 1870, p. 55.
(3) Ibid., p. 56.
(4) Butter, p. 182.
entirely in the hands of the pandits, who were generally maintained by a "Gift of rent-free lands rarely exceeding [1] hundred rupees in annual value from the samindars. Such schools were established in the chaklas of Salon, Partapgarh and Ahladganj. These schools were attended by from 50 to 100 boys, "and the samindars similarly proportions the pandits' [2] allotment which varies from 10 to 100 bighas."

As our description would show, the Oudh kingdom continued, by and large, the system inherited from the Mughal Empire. The one great change seems to be that proprietary rights were acquired by the grantees over their grants, as now these tended to become freely stable and transferable.

There was, perhaps, a greater amount of liberality towards shi'ite establishments, and a tolerant attitude towards Hindu institutions. But these were perhaps, the only observable changes that seem to have been affected.

(1) Ibid., p. 165.
(2) Ibid., p. 165.
(a) Banditry

The root causes of the banditry, during the first half of the 19th century, may be explained in terms of the faulty system of the revenue administration of the kingdom of Oudh Government, and the general deterioration of administration. Lalji in his *Mirat-al-Ausa*, while giving a vivid description of the evils of the *taa'illugdari* system during the decade before the annexation, describes in detail the reasons for the lawlessness and the frequent murder in the realm. He throws all the responsibility upon the cruelty and arbitrary manners of the amils and the mustajirs (revenue farmers) and the neglect of their duty by the servants of the state. He provides us with a description of the process by which a *taa'illugdar* or zamindar turned into leader of bandith. He says, "The strongest reasons for the occurrence of the ravages and depredations by the *taa'illugders*, as a result of which the country is rendered desolate and the people are murdered, are that the settlement of the revenue upon those who pay it, is not made in accordance with their portions and shares in this country. If the servants

(1) Third Section of the Chapter two of Mirat is entitled, "A description of the occurrences of depredations and murder as a result of the arbitrary manner of the amils and revenue-collectors". ff. 11B-22A.
of the state ever thought to divide the land-revenue in shares between the parties with their mutual consent, smil and the revenue contractors never respected the agreement and having the temptation to raise the amount, they never allowed the due share to the share holders. This becomes the cause of frequent ravages, depredation of the country and killings of people. It thus happens that one of two brothers, who are the semindars of one ta'llaluqa or one village may submit the qubuliyat of the land-revenue to the smil and his legal share and deny the other brother his share. The brother whose share has been usurped begins to ravage (the estate). At another place Lalji comments that peace would have prevailed, "if the smil had given the half share to the rebel brother .......

The bandits seem to have included persons of all the class including peasants, the unemployed soldiers or those whose pay was in arrears. Bishop Heber, while he was coming from Kanpur to Lucknow, met with a state of seige at the very entrance of Lucknow, "because a large sum of money, said to 30,000 Rs., on its way to the treasury at Lucknow, had attracted a number of neighbouring peasants, who were assembled outside the walls

(1) Lalji: op. cit. ff. 11b-12b.
(2) Ibid., f, 13A.
with their weapons, waiting for the departure of the treasure...

The sense of insecurity had developed so much among the people, that to Heber's surprise, "all or nearly all the remaining population was as much loaded with arms as the inhabitants of the country --- but I should apprehend that Lucknow offered at this movement a more warlike exterior than our own metropolis ever did during its most embroiled and troublesome periods."

The situation arose because people had simply lost faith in the capacity of the administration to provide any security. Consequently they took it upon themselves to defend themselves against any possible attack by any group of bandits. Butter observed in 1886 that "Sarangpur, 10 miles south of Tanda, has a population of 9,000 Hindu thieves, dacoits (Gang-robbers) and thugs, whose depredations extend as far as Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Benaras. Still Heber was not ready to "think that the people of Oude are habitually ferocious or blood thirsty ---."

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(1) Heber, p. 46.
(2) Ibid, p.46.
(3) Lalji informs us that "because of the prevalence of the acts of depredations throughout the kingdom of Oudh, it was necessary for the inhabitants to keep themselves armed, hence every inhabitant of Oudh carried arms with him even if he had to go outside the house to attend to the call of nature." ff.75a.

(4) Heber, p.52.
Often because the refractory *taa'llugdars* and *samindars* saved on revenue paid to the *smula*, the villages held by them were very well managed and cultivated. As the king of Oudh, Ghaziuddin Haider (1814-18) informed to Resident of British East India Company in 1823, the estates of refractory *taa'llugdars* were quite flourishing and populous and many of these estates yielded more than 2 or 3 times the amount at which they have been assessed.

The forces that the 'bandit' *samindars* and *taa'llugdars* employed to despoil the country consisted mainly of 'outlaws' and 'proclaimed' persons. Sloeman noticed the system of the recruitment of such 'soldiers' by some leaders of the bandits. Ghulam Hazrat, a small land-holder of Jhareapora already mentioned had also became the leader of the bandits in his area. He wanted to recruit some soldiers for his group so, "he sent some men to aid the prisoners in the great jail at Lucknow to break-out, 5 of them were killed in the attempt, 7 were wounded, and 25 were retaken, but 45 escaped." The forces so raised were employed by him to extend his control over the neighbouring estates.

The Baiswara region had been famous for its seditious

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(1) Sloeman, pp. 56-57.
(2) Ibid, pp. 2-3.
(3) Ibid, pp. 2-3.
(1) These local chieftains along with their armed retainers posed a constant threat to the local administration; and on occasions, they indulged in acts of banditry.

(2) Mirza Muhammad Hadi Ruswa's *Omrao Jan Ada* is full of many incidents of banditry and robbery organised by the Baiswara zamindars with the help of their retainers. At one place Ruswa complained that the area between Baiswara and Unnao is infested with the highway robbers and dacoits, and it was quite unsafe for the travellers to pass through it. A party of travellers passing through this region is said to have been attacked by the ganwara in the Ganges ravines. The ganwara rode good horses and had swords and matchlocks. Clearly such well armed bands could only have been organized with the help of local zamindars.

The chakledars and other revenue officials were also responsible for the rise of banditry. It appears that these revenue officials had a tendency to demand a higher amount from

(1) "A district was officially constituted under the name of Baiswara; it constituted, we are told of many mahals that are the home of the editions zamindars of the clan (qam) of Bais." *Insha-i-Roshan Kalâm*, ff. 6b–7a of. Irfan Habib: Agrarian System of Mughal India, p.161.

(2) Mirza Muhammad Hadi Ruswa: *Omrâo Jan Ada*, Allahabad 1978. The Central theme of the novel does not appear as pure fiction, hence the information contained in it, can very well be used for our study.

(3) Ibid., p.149.

(4) Ibid., p.153.
the zamindars and the taal'luqadar, and they, being unable to pay the raised amount, used to fly to the jungles and offer resistance to the royal forces. Butter comments, "whenever the chakledar pitches his tent, the work of plunder and devastation commences, with the uproofing of the neighbouring villages to supply temporary huts for his troops; the zamindars and their immediate adherents at the same time flying to the jungles, when they ascertain an intention on the chakledar's, "

(1)

to increase their burden." Because of such an uncertain situation every zaminder was always ready to resist the chakledar.

The peasants and the state treasury seem to have been chief sufferers from such a situation as the zamindar used to fly to the forest after making a summary levy of the taxes and then the peasants were left at the mercy of the chakledars who used to enforce harsh payments from the peasants. The loss to the state exchequer from banditry can be illustrated by one example: the pergunah of Nawabganj which formerly paid Rs. 1,35000 to the state treasury, now (year ) did not yield Rs. 70,000 (2) and this was due to the depredations of Ghulam Hazrat.

(1) Butter, pp.50-51.
(2) Ibid, p.101. A more successful operation against bandits is referred to in the novel Umrak Jan Ada. The court of Lucknow directed a local Raja in Baiswara region to clear out the bandit gangs from the places of their hide-outs, and the Raja thereupon captured many of them and sent to Lucknow to be punished. The novelist further says the drive forced the decoits to enter the British territories adjacent to Baiswara region. (pp.158 and 190/.
(3) Sleeman, pp.28-30.
(b) **Sepoys as factor in agrarian instability**

An important element in the agrarian society of Oudh was formed by the sepoys, who, largely coming from the Rajput clans, served in the East India Company's forces, including the regiments posted in the kingdom under the subsidiary alliance. It was estimated by a British official in 1845 that "three-fourth of Bengal's Native infantry come from Oudh."

The Bengal army, comprised the bulk of the company's forces; and if the estimate was accurate, the number of sepoys from Oudh must have been considerable. The Hindu population of Oudh was supposed to furnish the best disciplined infantry in India."

In round figure, there were some 50,000 Oudh men serving with East India Company.

These sepoys had the privilege of getting their grievances within Oudh redressed through the intercession of the Resident. These grievances ranged from petty land disputes to cases of criminal nature. Most often the appeals were prepared on mis-

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(1) For the treaties see Mittonson, *Collection of treaties*, Vol. II, Nos. XXIV to XXXVII, pp. 67-703.


(4) K.D. Peer's introduction to J.H. Sleeman's, *A journey through the kingdom of Oudh*, 1971, p. 4 He, however, does not cite his source.
information or were barred by limitation. But the Resident in a large number of cases obtained what the sepoys desired to the great detriment of the authority of the King's officials.

This naturally led to a situation where, as a British official observed, "Semindars throughout the country will buy, beg, borrow or steal the name of a British sepoy, in the hope of thus gaining attention to their petty claims ..... We are indeed of opinion that much as the Oudh Government is molested and degraded by sepoys' claims, true, and false, the men themselves are rarely benefited by the Resident's interference, litigation is promoted; hopes are excited and eventually the party who would if left to his own resources and the practices of the country, have arranged or compromised his quarrel, is led on to his ruin."

(1) "These native officers and siphees ------ (are) certainly among the most untruthful and unscrupulous in stating the circumstances of their claims, or the grounds of their complaints". Only civil cases which were not over 6 years old and the criminal cases which were 3 years old were to be taken up by the Resident on behalf of the sepoys. But in most of the cases the actual incident complained of, had occurred much earlier. Sleeman, vol.I, pp.163-65, Vol.II, p.241.

(2) Thus observes Lawrncoo, "At Lucknow for years the Residents held public darbars, where the guaranteed attended, and pleaded against their own sovereign or his servants. Thus were the monarch and his subjects arrayed against each other; thus was the sovereign degraded in his own capital." Calcutta Review, 1845, pp.414-15.

(3) Ibid
Nevertheless, it was this privilege that primarily made the Oudh sepoys join the company’s service. An Oudh sepoy used to get Rs. 5/- & 5½/- per month. While a trooper in the British regiment (recruited from British territory) (1) got Rs. 7/-. Moreover the Oudh sepoys had no pension benefits; they could not claim any extra allowance while on march. But they were entitled to avail one month’s leave. Those who were posted to Oudh remained close to home. They got fuel and fodder and often food for nothing. Their baggage was always carried for them at public cost. Their gain was thus often at the expense of their fellow-peasants or even zamindars. As Sleeman admitted, “they (sepoys) were the privileged class, who gave much trouble and annoyance, and were often the terror for their non-privileged neighbours and co-sharers in the land.”

The grievances of the sepoys for which they sought redress from the Resident varied in nature and dimension. There were cases when a near relative of any sepoy was killed by bandits; or they were robbed of their belongings by the dacoits.

(1) Sleeman, vol. II, p. 255. Still an influential representative of the commandant of the local corps was always required to be present in the court in order to secure the pay of the sepoys, arms, accountrements, clothings etc. For example Captain Barlow, the commandant of the native infantry corps posted at Khayrabad used to reside almost all the time at the court, drawing allowances and emoluments of all kinds while his second in command performed his regimental duties for him.
If the victims were denied justice by the local authorities or they were not satisfied with the judgement delivered upon a particular case, the aggrieved sepoy could approach the Resident, considering him as the highest court of appeal. The Resident could order a fresh investigation into the whole matter. Since every individual sepoy had no direct access to the Residency, it is quite possible that the sepoy used to submit his petition through his commandant. But the tour made by W.H. Sleeman in the kingdom of Oudh on the behest of the Governor General, provided ample opportunity to every sepoy to approach him directly with a petition. His diary is full of details of such petitions. For instance while he was passing by the village Purenda [Gonda-Bahraich district], he was

(1) It appears from the confessions of Sleeman that he was very much conscious of his limitations. His official position was of merely an intermediary between the sepoys and the local authorities. But indeed the sepoys considered him as the highest court of appeal and believed that he could decide the matterial once -- In practice indeed the Residents behaved in a manner as to actually over rule the authority of the king.

(2) Sleeman's camp was always crowded by the sepoys, morning and evening, and he was engaged all the time going through their petitions. "I have every day scores of petitions delivered to me with quivering lip and tearful eye; by the person who have been plundered of all they possessed, had their dearest relatives murdered or tortured to death and their habitations burnt to the ground by gang of ruffians under land-lords of high birth and pretensions, who they had never wronged or offended". Ibid, Vol. II, p. 241.

approached by Omraw Poree, a non-commissioned officer of the Gwalior contingent whose family resided in a neighbouring villages. His father Syam Moore was killed by a group of ruffians, but he failed to get the culprits punished by the local authorities. On receiving this petition Sleeman ordered his subordinate captain Weston to take the depositions of the witnesses and to adopt measures necessary for the occasion.

It should not be supposed that the sepoys were deliberately harassed by the local officials or that they were the chief sufferers in the kingdom. But the period was marked by a deteriorating law and order situation generally. In the midst of such conditions the sepoy used to create further problems for the local administration by asking for intervention of the Resident; thus adding further insult to injury. The hallowness of several of the complaint made by these sepoys was quite apparent even to a person who had just a cursory glance at their petitions. Sleeman observed that, "the wrongs of which they (sepoys) complain, are of course, such as all men of their class in Oude are liable to suffer; but no other men in Oude are so prone to exaggerate the circumstances attending them to bring forward prominently all that is favourable to their own

(2) Kingdom of Oude, Calcutta Review, 1845, pp.
side and keep back all that is otherwise; and to overcome the difficulties which much attend the enforcement of an award when made." This last was because the sepoy's complaints often involved local magnets whom the Oudh officials dared not annoy. Says Sleeman, "Their (sepoy's) claims are often upon men who have well garrisoned forts, and large bands of armed followers who laugh at the king's officers and troops, and could not be coerced into obedience without the aid of a large and well appointed British force — on one occasion no less than thirty lives were lost in attempting to enforce an award in favour of a sipahi of our army."

The reasons for the local disruption of agrarian life are not far to seek. Shaikh Mehboob Ali was a retired subedar-major of the Awadh army. He had been able to acquire the possession of a village in addition to the lands already held by him, by invoking the aid of the Resident in his land disputes. Still he found it quite difficult to have the cultivators till the land. Taxed for the reasons, he told Sleeman that the neighbouring land lord's hostility towards him prevented people from cultivating in his village. This was because with the Resident's help, he had evicted a person who had been the zamindar of his village for the last 50 years.

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(1) Sleeman, p. 177-86
(2) Sleeman, p. 277-81
(3) Sleeman, p. 777-86
On occasions the sepoys behaved like 'dignified beggars' or even 'robbers'. At the approach of the sepoy army the villagers were robbed of their stocks and even belongings. When Sleeman himself was passing through the districts of Sandeela-Bangar and encamped in the village Sakin, the sepoys of his camp had taken forcibly all the stocks of straw (bhoosa) kept by the peasants for the use of their own cattle. The matter was reported to Sleeman by some daring cultivators. On his enquiring into the matter, Sleeman was informed that this was the established practice of the day that, "All villages near the road, along which the troops and establishment move are plundered of bhoosa (straw), and all those within ten miles of the place where they may be detained for a week or (1) fortnight, are plundered in the same way". Even some times the Grass-shed (chapper) were removed from the huts of the poor peasants by the sepoys in order to meet the camp requirements. Sometimes the peasants were duty bound to provide the food grains and other necessities to the encamping army of the sepoys. Sleeman informs us, "These [the peasants] are not only plundered but taxed by them (sepoys) - first the sipahis take their chapper beams and rafters off their houses, then the people incharge of artillery bullocks and other cattle take all their stocks of bhoosa straw & co and threaten to turn the cattle loose on their fields, if not paid a gratuity---, In short the approach of king’s servant is dreaded as one of the greatest calamities that befall them (peasants). (2)"

(1) Sleeman, vol. II, pp. 615
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The population of the kingdom of Oudh C.1856 has been estimated by us at about 1,07,17,329, the mean density being 448 to the square mile. The approximate expanse of the cultivated land in the kingdom was about 76,81,239 acres, or 0.716 acre per head. There were still patches of forest land scattered throughout Oudh. One factor which prevented deforestation was apparently the need of the large zamindars to have forests within which they could site forts or have safe places of refuge.

Almost all cash crops and foodgrain crops of today were raised on the fertile plains of Oudh. The seed-yield ratio seems to have been quite reasonable. Crop-rotation and dung-manuring was practised, but not scientifically understood. The agricultural implements made of tillage and methods employed for artificial irrigation were similar to those used in other parts of the country. But the Persian wheel, later to amount be so common, was not in use. The per capita of live-stock did not fully meet the needs of the peasants. This was mainly due to the scarcity of the grazing grounds and the practice of the superior right holders of seizing and selling of the cattle of the peasants when latter failed to pay the land-revenue.
The land-revenue formed the basis of the entire political and economic structure of the Kingdom of Oudh. The size of the surplus extracted from the peasants varied according to the circumstances. It appears that in money terms the land-tax ranged between Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per bigha. The contract or gabs system was largely followed with dire results. The peasants' share was assessed by the local officials quite arbitrarily; and the system was notably oppressive for the small peasants. Generally the zamindars were asked to pay the assessed land-revenue on behalf of the entire village. In case of latter's failure to pay the entire amount within the prescribed time, the village was sacked by the faziladar and chakledar. For the purpose of revenue collection the kingdom was divided into khelisa estates, huzoor tehsil, ijarah and amanee areas. The various arrangements (huzoor tehsil, ijarah and amanee) were tried from time to time in different areas, without any marked degree of success. The system of revenue assessment and collection had been held responsible by most contemporary critics for all the mis-management and mal-administration of the kingdom.

The zamindars occupied a crucial position, in rural society. In their rights were proprietary in nature, being hereditary and salable; but these did not amount to a right to property in the land. The right was distinct from the right to the land-revenue (held for example by madad-i ma'ash-holders).
The zamindars' perquisites varied from area to area. Sometimes zamindars' right was combined with the madad-e-wa'ash rights. The income from their own sources was often much higher than was indicated by their authorized rights of nankar (or allowance from land-revenue). The amount so raised was spent lavishly in maintaining armed retainers and mud-forts (garhis). Zamindars who contracted to pay land revenue on areas outside their zamindaris were known as ta'allugasars. Some individual zamindars and ta'allugasar had grown so powerful that even the royal forces were helpless to keep them under control. Thus a zamindar in a village could become a land-revenue collector, armed chief, a patriarch and judge, all rolled into one.

Revenue-grants (madad-i wa'ash) were made to the individuals by conferring the right to keep an area of land with no fiscal obligations; cash-grants in form of rozina, mahana and salana were also made. Similarly cash allowances were sanctioned out of the interest on deposits and loans placed by nawaab with the East India Company. The grantees tended to acquire proprietary rights over their grants as during this period these were held to be freely salable and transferable. It seems that shi'ite establishments were patronised liberally, while a tolerant attitude was also adopted towards sunni and Hindu establishments.
The inequities of the land-revenue system, and the armed power of the zamindars were the twin sources of the widespread prevalence of banditry in Oudh. The offended party in any revenue foray or zamindari dispute, became the leader of the banditti. Their ranks were joined by the 'unemployed soldiers' and other 'outlaws'. Because of the indulgence of a section of population roads frequently became unsafe.

The administration suffered constant interference from the English Resident on account of the Company's sepoys who had the privilege to get their grievances 'ventilated' before the king through British officials. The result was that the Company's sepoys constituted an unruly element in the rural population, manufacturing grievances for their own profit and universally ill-treating the other inhabitants.

The agrarian life of Oudh before the annexation thus displayed a stagnant form of the Mughal system subjected to heavy external pressure and widening internal fissures. It is difficult to find much to commend in the Oudh kingdom. Yet despite the manifold evils by which it was beset, the Oudh system was not one of total spoliation or anarchy as described by its critics. Its very ineptitude protected the Oudh peasants and zamindars from the extreme distress which the Mahalwari system of the British Government imposed contemporaneously on the adjoining Ceded and Conquered Provinces.
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